

# THE UNTOUCHABLES WHO WERE THEY AND WHY THEY BECAME UNTOUCHABLES ?

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Inscribed to the memory of  
**NANDNAR**  
*RAVIDAS*  
**CHOKHAMELA**

THREE RENOWNED SAINTS WHO WERE BORN AMONG THE  
UNTOUCHABLES AND WHO BY THEIR PIETY AND VIRTUE WON  
THE ESTEEM OF ALL.

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#### **PREFACE**

This book is a sequel to my treatise called *The Shudras—Who they were and How they came to be the Fourth Varna of the Indo-Aryan Society* which was published in 1946. Besides the Shudras, the Hindu Civilisation has produced three social classes whose existence has not received the attention it deserves. The three classes are :-

- (i) The Criminal Tribes who number about 20 millions or so;
- (ii) The Aboriginal Tribes who number about 15 millions; and
- (iii) The Untouchables who number about 50 millions.

The existence of these classes is an abomination. The Hindu Civilisation, gauged in the light of these social products, could hardly be called civilisation. It is a diabolical contrivance to suppress and enslave humanity. Its proper name would be infamy. What else can be said of a civilisation which has produced a mass of people who are taught to accept crime as an approved means of earning their livelihood, another mass of people who are left to live in full bloom of their primitive barbarism in the midst of civilisation and a third mass of people who are treated as an entity beyond human intercourse and whose mere touch is enough to cause pollution?

In any other country the existence of these classes would have led to searching of the heart and to investigation of their origin. But neither of these has occurred to the mind of the Hindu. The reason is simple. The Hindu does not regard the existence of these classes as a matter of apology or shame and feels no responsibility either to atone for it or to inquire into its origin and growth. On the other hand, every Hindu is taught to believe that his civilisation is not only the most ancient but that it is also in many respects altogether unique. No Hindu ever feels tired of repeating these claims. That the Hindu Civilisation is the most ancient, one can understand and even allow. But it is not quite so easy to understand on what grounds they rely for claiming that the Hindu Civilisation is a unique one. The Hindus may not like it, but so far as it strikes non-Hindus, such a claim can rest only on one ground. It is the existence of these classes for which the Hindu Civilisation is responsible. That the existence of such classes is a unique phenomenon, no Hindu need repeat, for nobody can deny the fact. One only wishes that the Hindu realised that it was a matter for which there was more cause for shame than pride.

The inculcation of these false beliefs in the sanity, superiority and sanctity of Hindu Civilisation is due entirely to the peculiar social psychology of Hindu scholars.

Today all scholarship is confined to the Brahmins. But unfortunately no Brahmin scholar has so far come forward to play the part of a Voltaire who

had the intellectual honesty to rise against the doctrines of the Catholic Church in which he was brought up; nor is one likely to appear on the scene in the future. It is a grave reflection on the scholarship of the Brahmins that they should not have produced a Voltaire. This will not cause surprise if it is remembered that the Brahmin scholar is only a learned man. He is not an intellectual. There is a world of difference between one who is learned and one who is an intellectual. The former is class-conscious and is alive to the interests of his class. The latter is an emancipated being who is free to act without being swayed by class considerations. It is because the Brahmins have been only learned men that they have not produced a Voltaire.

Why have the Brahmins not produced a Voltaire? The question can be answered only by another question. Why did the Sultan of Turkey not abolish the religion of the Mohammedan World? Why has no Pope denounced Catholicism? Why has the British Parliament not made a law ordering the killing of all blue-eyed babies? The reason why the Sultan or the Pope or the British Parliament has not done these things is the same as why the Brahmins have not been able to produce a Voltaire. It must be recognised that the selfish interest of a person or of the class to which he belongs always acts as an internal limitation which regulates the direction of his intellect. The power and position which the Brahmins possess is entirely due to the Hindu Civilisation which treats them as supermen and subjects the lower classes to all sorts of disabilities so that they may never rise and challenge or threaten the superiority of the Brahmins over them. As is natural, every Brahmin is interested in the maintenance of Brahmanic supremacy be he orthodox or unorthodox, be he a priest or a *grahastha*, be he a scholar or not. How can the Brahmins afford to be Voltaires? A Voltaire among the Brahmins would be a positive danger to the maintenance of a civilisation which is contrived to maintain Brahmanic supremacy. The point is that the intellect of a Brahmin scholar is severely limited by anxiety to preserve his interest. He suffers from this internal limitation as a result of which he does not allow his intellect full play which honesty and integrity demands. For, he fears that it may affect the interests of his class and therefore his own.

But what annoys one is the intolerance of the Brahmin scholar towards any attempt to expose the Brahmanic literature. He himself would not play the part of an iconoclast even where it is necessary. And he would not allow such non-Brahmins as have the capacity to do so to play it. If any non-Brahmin were to make such an attempt the Brahmin scholars would engage in a conspiracy of silence, take no notice of him, condemn him outright on some flimsy grounds or dub his work useless. As a writer engaged in the exposition of the Brahmanic literature I have been a victim of such mean tricks.

Notwithstanding the attitude of the Brahmin scholars, I must pursue the task I have undertaken. For the origin of these classes is a subject which still awaits investigation. This book deals with one of these unfortunate classes

namely, the Untouchables. The Untouchables are the most numerous of the three. Their existence is also the most unnatural. And yet there has so far been no investigation into their origin. That the Hindus should not have undertaken such an investigation is perfectly understandable. The old orthodox Hindu does not think that there is anything wrong in the observance of untouchability. To him it is a normal and natural thing. As such it neither calls for expiation nor explanation. The new modern Hindu realises the wrong. But he is ashamed to discuss it in public for fear of letting the foreigner know that Hindu Civilisation can be guilty of such a vicious and infamous system or social code as evidenced by Untouchability. But what is strange is that Untouchability should have failed to attract the attention of the European student of social institutions. It is difficult to understand why. The fact, however, is there.

This book may therefore, be taken as a pioneer attempt in the exploration of a field so completely neglected by everybody. The book, if I may say so, deals not only with every aspect of the main question set out for inquiry, namely, the origin of Untouchability, but it also deals with almost all questions connected with it. Some of the questions are such that very few people are even aware of them; and those who are aware of them are puzzled by them and do not know how to answer them. To mention only a few, the book deals with such questions as : Why do the Untouchables live outside the village?

Why did beef-eating give rise to Untouchability ? Did the Hindus never eat beef ? Why did non-Brahmins give up beef-eating ? What made the Brahmins become vegetarians, etc.? To each one of these, the book suggests an answer. It may be that the answers given in the book to these questions are not all-embracing. Nonetheless it will be found that the book points to a new way of looking at old things.

The thesis on the origin of Untouchability advanced in the book is an altogether novel thesis. It comprises the following propositions :-

- (1) There is no racial difference between the Hindus and the Untouchables;
- (2) The distinction between the Hindus and Untouchables in its original form, before the advent of Untouchability, was the distinction between Tribesmen and Broken Men from alien Tribes. It is the Broken Men who subsequently came to be treated as Untouchables;
- (3) Just as Untouchability has no racial basis so also has it no occupational basis;
- (4) There are two roots from which Untouchability has sprung:
  - (a) Contempt and hatred of the Broken Men as of Buddhists by the Brahmins:
  - (b) Continuation of beef-eating by the Broken Men after it had been given up by others.
- (5) In searching for the origin of Untouchability care must be taken to distinguish the Untouchables from the Impure. All orthodox Hindu writers

have identified the Impure with the Untouchables. This is an error. Untouchables are distinct from the Impure.

(6) While the Impure as a class came into existence at the time of the Dharma Sutras the Untouchables came into being much later than 400 A.D.

These conclusions are the result of such historical research as I have been able to make. The ideal which a historian should place before himself has been well defined by Goethe who said :

"The historian's duty is to separate the true from the false, the certain from the uncertain, and the doubtful from that which cannot be accepted ... .. Every investigator must before all things look upon himself as one who is summoned to serve on a jury. He has only to consider how far the statement of the case is complete and clearly set forth by the evidence. Then he draws his conclusion and gives his vote, whether it be that his opinion coincides with that of the foreman or not."

There can be no difficulty in giving effect to Goethe's direction when the relevant and necessary facts are forthcoming. All this advice is of course very valuable and very necessary. But Goethe does not tell what the historian is to do when he comes across a missing link, when no direct evidence of connected relations between important events is available. I mention this because in the course of my investigations into the origin of Untouchability and other interconnected problems I have been confronted with many missing links. It is true that I am not the only one who has been confronted with them. All students of ancient Indian history have had to face them. For as Mount Stuart Elphinstone has observed in Indian history "no *date* of a public event can be fixed before the invasion of Alexander: and no connected relation of the natural transactions can be attempted until after the Mohammedan conquest." This is a sad confession but that again does not help. The question is: "What is a student of history to do? Is he to cry halt and stop his work until the link is discovered?" I think not. I believe that in such cases it is permissible for him to use his imagination and intuition to bridge the gaps left in the chain of facts by links not yet discovered and to propound a working hypothesis suggesting how facts which cannot be connected by known facts might have been inter-connected. I must admit that rather than hold up the work, I have preferred to resort to this means to get over the difficulty created by the missing links which have come in my way.

Critics may use this weakness to condemn the thesis as violating the canons of historical research. If such be the attitude of the critics I must remind them that if there is a law which governs the evaluation of the results of historical results then refusal to accept a thesis on the ground that it is based on direct evidence is bad law. Instead of concentrating themselves on the issue of direct evidence *versus* inferential evidence and inferential evidence *versus* speculation, what the critics should concern themselves with

is to examine (i) whether the thesis is based on pure conjecture, and (ii) whether the thesis is possible and if so does it fit in with facts better than mine does?

On the first issue I could say that the thesis would not be unsound merely because in some parts it is based on guess. My critics should remember that we are dealing with an institution the origin of which is lost in antiquity. The present attempt to explain the origin of Untouchability is not the same as writing history from texts which speak with certainty. It is a case of reconstructing history where there are no texts, and if there are, they have no direct bearing on the question. In such circumstances what one has to do is to strive to divine what the texts conceal or suggest without being even quite certain of having found the truth. The task is one of gathering survivals of the past, placing them together and making them tell the story of their birth. The task is analogous to that of the archaeologist who constructs a city from broken stones or of the palaeontologist who conceives an extinct animal from scattered bones and teeth or of a painter who reads the lines of the horizon and the smallest vestiges on the slopes of the hill to make up a scene. In this sense the book is a work of art even more than of history. The origin of Untouchability lies buried in a dead past which nobody knows. To make it alive is like an attempt to reclaim to history a city which has been dead since ages past and present it as it was in its original condition. It cannot but be that imagination and hypothesis should pay a large part in such a work. But that in itself cannot be a ground for the condemnation of the thesis. For without trained imagination no scientific inquiry can be fruitful and hypothesis is the very soul of science. As Maxim Gorky has said\* :

"Science and literature have much in common; in both, observation, comparison and study are of fundamental importance; the artist like the scientist, needs both imagination and intuition. Imagination and intuition bridge the gaps in the chain of facts by its as yet undiscovered links and permit the scientist to create hypothesis and theories which more or less correctly and successfully direct the searching of the mind in its study of the forms and phenomenon of nature. They are of literary creation; the art of creating characters and types demands imagination, intuition, the ability to make things up in one's own mind".

It is therefore unnecessary for me to apologise for having resorted to constructing links where they *were* missing. Nor can my thesis be said to be vitiated on that account for nowhere is the construction of links based on pure conjecture. The thesis in great part is based on facts and inferences from facts. And where it is not based on facts or inferences from facts, it is based on circumstantial evidence of presumptive character resting on considerable degree of probability. There is nothing that I have urged in support of my thesis which I have asked my readers to accept on trust. I have at least shown that there exists a preponderance of probability in favour of what I

have asserted. It would be nothing but pedantry to say that a preponderance of probability is not a sufficient basis for a valid decision.

On the second point with the examination of which, I said, my critics should concern themselves what I would like to say is that I am not so vain as to claim any finality for my thesis. I do not ask them to accept it as the last word. I do not wish to influence their judgement. They are of course free to come to their own conclusion. All I say to them is to consider whether this thesis is not a workable and therefore, for the time being, a valid hypothesis if the test of a valid hypothesis is that it should fit in with all surrounding facts, explain them and give them a meaning which in its absence they do not appear to have. I do not want anything more from my critics than a fair and unbiased appraisal.

*January 1, 1948*  
*1, Hardinge Avenue,*  
*New Delhi.*

B. R. AMBEDKAR

**PART I**  
**A COMPARATIVE SURVEY**

**CHAPTER I**

**UNTOUCHABILITY AMONG NON-HINDUS**

WHO are the Untouchables and what is the origin of Untouchability? These are the main topics which it is sought to investigate and the results of which are contained in the following pages. Before launching upon the investigation it is necessary to deal with certain preliminary questions. The first such question is : Are the Hindus the only people in the world who observe Untouchability? The second is: If Untouchability is observed by Non-Hindus also how does Untouchability among Hindus compare with Untouchability among non-Hindus? Unfortunately no such comparative study has so far been attempted. The result is that though most people are aware of the existence of Untouchability among the Hindus they do not know what are its unique features. A definite idea of its unique and distinguishing features is however essential not merely for a real understanding of the position of the Untouchables but also as the best means of emphasising the need of investigating into their origin.

It is well to begin by examining how the matter stood in Primitive and Ancient Societies. Did they recognise Untouchability? At the outset it is necessary to have a clear idea as to what is meant by Untouchability. On this point, there can be no difference of opinion. It will be agreed on all hands that what underlies Untouchability is the notion of defilement, pollution, contamination and the ways and means of getting rid of that defilement.

Examining the social life of Primitive Society\* in order to find out whether or not it recognised Untouchability in the sense mentioned above there can be

no doubt that Primitive Society not only did believe in the notion of defilement but the belief had given rise to a live system of well-defined body of rites and rituals.

Primitive Man believed that defilement was caused by

- (1) the occurrences of certain events;
- (2) contact with certain things; and
- (3) contact with certain persons.

Primitive Man also believed in the transmission of evil from one person to another. To him the danger of such transmission was peculiarly acute at particular times such as the performance of natural functions, eating, drinking, etc. Among the events the occurrence of which was held by Primitive Man as certain to cause defilement included the following :—

- (1) Birth
- (2) Initiation
- (3) Puberty
- (4) Marriage
- (5) Cohabitation
- (6) Death

Expectant mothers were regarded as impure and a source of defilement to others. The impurity of the mother extended to the child also.

Initiation and puberty are stages which mark the introduction of the male and the female to full sexual and social life. They were required to observe seclusion, a special diet, frequent ablutions, use of pigment for the body and bodily mutilation such as circumcision. Among the American Tribes not only did the initiates observe a special dietary but also took an emetic at regular intervals.

The ceremonies which accompanied marriage show that marriage was regarded by the Primitive Man as impure. In some cases the bride was required to undergo intercourse by men of the tribe as in Australia or by the chief or the medicine man of the tribe as in America or by the friends of the grooms as among the East African Tribes. In some cases there takes place the tapping of the bride by a sword by the bridegroom. In some cases, as among the Mundas, there takes place marriage to a tree before marriage with the bridegroom. All these marriage observances are intended to neutralise and prepare the individual against the impurity of marriage.

To the Primitive Man the worst form of pollution was death. Not only the corpse, but the possession of the belongings of the deceased were regarded as infected with pollution. The widespread custom of placing implements, weapons, etc., in the grave along with the corpse indicates that their use by others was regarded as dangerous and unlucky.

Turning to pollution arising out of contact with objects. Primitive Man had learned to regard certain objects as sacred and certain others as profane. For a person to touch the sacred was to contaminate the sacred and to cause



pollution to it. A most striking example of the separation of the sacred and the profane in Primitive Society is to be found among the Todas, the whole of whose elaborate ritual and (it would not be too much to say) the whole basis of whose social organisation is directed towards securing the ceremonial purity of the sacred herds, the sacred dairy, the vessels, and the milk, and of those whose duty it is to perform connected rites and rituals. In the dairy, the sacred vessels are always kept in a separate room and the milk reaches them only by transfer to and fro of an intermediate vessel kept in another room. The dairyman, who is also the priest, is admitted to office only after an elaborate ordination, which in effect is a purification. He is thereby removed from the rank of ordinary men to a state of fitness for sacred office. His conduct is governed by regulations such as those which permit him to sleep in the village and only at certain times, or that which entails that a dairyman who attends a funeral should cease from that time to perform his sacred function. It has, therefore, been conjectured that the aim of much of the ritual is to avert the dangers of profanation and prepare or neutralise the sacred substance for consumption by those who are themselves unclean.

The notion of the sacred was not necessarily confined to objects. There were certain classes of men who were sacred. For a person to touch them was to cause pollution. Among the Polynesians, the tabu character of a Chief is violated by the touch of an inferior, although in this case the danger falls upon the inferior. On the other hand, in Efate, the 'sacred man' who comes into contact with Namin (ceremonial uncleanliness) destroys his sacredness. In Uganda, before building a temple, the men were given four days in which to purify themselves. On the other hand, the Chief and his belongings are very often regarded as sacred and, therefore, as dangerous to others of an inferior rank. In the Tonga island, anyone who touches a Chief contacted tabu; it was removed by touching the sole of the foot of a superior chief. The sacred quality of the chief in Malaya Peninsula also resided in the Royal Regalia and anyone touching it was invited with serious illness or death.

Contact with strange people was also regarded as a source of Untouchability by the Primitive Man. Among the Bathonga, a tribe in South Africa, it is believed that those who travel outside their own country are peculiarly open to danger from the influence of foreign spirits and in particular from demoniac possession. Strangers are tabu because, worshipping strange gods, they bring strange influence with them. They are, therefore, fumigated or purified in some other way. In the Dieri and neighbouring tribes even a member of the tribe returning home after a journey was treated as a stranger and no notice was taken of him until he sat down.

The danger of entering a new country is as great as that which attaches to those who come from thence. In Australia, when one tribe approaches another, the members carry lighted sticks to purify the air, just as the Spartan kings in making war had sacred fires from the altar "arried before them to the

frontier.

In the same manner, those entering a house from the outside world were required to perform some ceremony, even if it were only to remove their shoes, which would purify the incomer from the evil with which otherwise he might contaminate those within, while the threshold, door-posts and lintel—important as points of contact with outer world— are smeared with blood or sprinkled with water when any member of household or of the community has become a source of pollution, or a horse-shoe is suspended over the door to keep out evil and bring goodluck.

Of course, the rites and ceremonies connected with birth, death, marriage, etc., do not positively and unequivocally suggest that they were regarded as sources of pollution. ' But that pollution is one element among many others is indicated by the fact that in every case there is segregation. There is segregation and isolation in birth, initiation, marriage, death and in dealing with the sacred and the strange.

In birth the mother is segregated. At puberty and initiation there is segregation and seclusion for a period. In marriage, from the time of betrothal until the actual ceremony bride and bride-groom do not meet. In menstruation a woman is subjected to segregation. Segregation is most noticeable in the case of death. There is not only isolation of the dead-body but there is isolation of all the relatives of the dead from the rest of the community. This segregation is evidenced by the growth of hair and nail and wearing of old clothes by the relatives of the dead which show that they are not served by the rest of the society such as the barber, washerman, etc. The period of segregation and the range of segregation differ in the case of death but the fact of segregation is beyond dispute. In the case of defilement of the sacred by the profane or of defilement of the kindred or by intercourse with the non-kindred there is also the element of segregation. The profane must keep away from the sacred. So the kindred must keep away from the non-kindred. It is thus clear that in Primitive Society pollution involved segregation of the polluting agent.

Along with the development of the notion of defilement. Primitive Society had developed certain purificatory media and purificatory ceremonies for dispelling impurity.

Among the agents used for dispelling impurity are water and blood. The sprinkling of water and the sprinkling of blood by the person defiled were enough to make him pure. Among purificatory rites were included changing of clothes, cutting hair, nail, etc., sweat-bath, fire, fumigation, burning of incense and fanning with the bough of a tree.

These were the means of removing impurity. But Primitive Society had another method of getting rid of impurity. This was to transfer it to another person. It was transferred to some one who was already tabu.

In New Zealand, if anyone touched the head of another, the head being a

peculiarly 'sacred' part of the body, he became tabu. He purified himself by rubbing his hands on femroot, which was then eaten by the head of the family in female line. In Tonga, if a man ate tabued food he saved himself from the evil consequences by having the foot of a chief placed on his stomach.

The idea of transmission also appears in the custom of the scapegoat. In Fiji, a tabued person wiped his hands on a pig, which became sacred to the chief, while in Uganda, at the end of the period of mourning for a king a 'scapegoat' along with a cow, a goat, a dog, a fowl and the dust and fire from the king's house was conveyed to the Bunyoro frontier, and there the animals were maimed and left to die. This practice was held to remove all uncleanness from the king and queen.

Such are the facts relating to the notion of pollution as it prevailed in Primitive Society.

## II

Turning to Ancient Society the notion of pollution prevalent therein was not materially different from what was prevalent in Primitive Society. There is difference as to the sources of pollution. There is difference regarding purificatory ceremonies. But barring these differences the pattern of pollution and purification in Primitive and Ancient Society is the same.

Comparing the Egyptian system of pollution with the Primitive system there is no difference except that in Egypt it was practised on an elaborate scale.

Among the Greeks the causes of impurity were bloodshed, the presence of ghost and contact with death, sexual intercourse, childbirth, the evacuation of the body, the eating of certain food such as pea-soup, cheese and garlic, the intrusion of unauthorised persons into holy places, and, in certain circumstances, foul speech and quarrelling. The purificatory means, usually called *kaopoiā* by Greeks, were lustral water, sulphur, onions, fumigation and fire, incense, certain boughs and other vegetative growths, pitch, wool, certain stones and amulets, bright things like sunlight and gold, sacrificed animals, especially the pig and of these specially the blood and the skin; finally, certain festivals and festival rites particularly the ritual of cursing and the scapegoat. One unusual method was the cutting of the hair of the polluted person or sacrificial communion with the deity.

A striking feature of the Roman notion of pollution and purification is to be found in the belief of territorial and communal pollution and purification. Parallel to the *lustratio* of the house is the periodical purificatory ritual applied to a country district (*Pagi*). The *lustratio pagi* consisted in a religious procession right round its boundaries, with sacrifice. There seems to have been in ancient days a similar procession round the walls of the city, called *amburbium*. In historical times special purification of the City was carried out when a calamity called for it, e.g. after the early disasters in the Second Punic War. The object of all such expiations was to seek reconciliation with the

gods. Lustral ceremony accompanied the foundation of a colony. The *Therminalia* protective of boundaries, and the *Compitalia* of streets in the City were also probably lustral in their origin. Down to the late period, priests called *Luperci* perambulated in the boundaries of the earliest Rome, the settlement on the Palatinate. Earlier there was an annual solemn progress round the limits of the most ancient territory of the Primitive City. It was led by the Archaic priesthood called the *Arval* brotherhood. The ceremony was called *ambravalia* and it was distinctly piacular. When Roman territory was expanded no corresponding extension of the lustral rite seems ever to have been made. These round-about piacular surveys were common elsewhere, inside as well as outside Italy and particularly in Greece. The solemn words and prayers of the traditional chant, duly gone through without slip of tongue, seem to have had a sort of magical effect. Any error in the pronouncement of these forms would involve a need of reparation, just as in the earliest Roman legal system, the mispronunciation of the established verbal forms would bring loss of the lawsuit.

Other forms of quaint ancient ritual were connected with the piacular conception. The *Salii*, ancient priests of Mars, made a journey at certain times round a number of stations in the City. They also had a 'cleaning of the weapons' and a 'cleaning of the trumpets' which testify to a primitive notion that the efficiency of the army's weapons required purification. The 'washing' (*lustrum*) with which the census ended was in essence military; for it was connected with the *Comitia Centuriata*, which is merely the army in civil garb. *Lustratio exercitus* was often performed when the army was in the field, to remove superstitious dread which sometimes attacked it at other times, it was merely prophylactic. There was also a illustration of the fleet.

Like all Primitive people the Hebrews also entertained the notion of defilement. The special feature of their notion of defilement was the belief that defilement was also caused by contact with the carcass of unclean animals, by eating a carcass or by contact with creeping things, or by eating creeping things and by contact with animals which are always unclean such as "every beast which divided the hoof, and is not cloven footed, nor chewed the cud. ..whatsoever goes upon his paws, among all manner of beasts that go on all four". Contact with any unclean person was also defilement to the Hebrews. Two other special features of the Hebrew notion of defilement may be mentioned. The Hebrews believed that defilement might be caused to persons by idolatrous practices or to a land by the sexual impurities of the people.

On the basis of this survey, we can safely conclude that there are no people Primitive or Ancient who did not entertain the notion of pollution.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **UNTOUCHABILITY AMONG HINDUS**

IN the matter of pollution there is nothing to distinguish the Hindus from the Primitive or Ancient peoples. That they recognised pollution is abundantly clear from the Manu Smriti. Manu recognises physical defilement and also notional defilement.

Manu treated birth, death and menstruation as sources of impurity. With regard to death, defilement was very extensive in its range. It followed the rule of consanguinity. Death caused defilement to members of the family of the dead person technically called *Sapindas* and *Samanodakas*. It not only included maternal relatives such as maternal uncle but also remote relatives. It extended even to nonrelatives such as (1) teacher (2) teacher's son, (3) teacher's wife, (4) pupil (5) fellow student, (6) Shrotriya, (7) king, (8) friend, (9) members of the household, (10) those who carried the corpse and (11) those who touched the corpse.

Anyone within the range of defilement could not escape it. There were only certain persons who were exempt. In the following verses Manu names them and specifies the reasons why he exempts them:—

- "V.93. The taint of impurity does not fall on kings and those engaged in the performance of a vow, or of a Sattra; for the first are seated on the throne of India, and the (last two are) ever pure like Brahman.
94. For a king, on the throne of magnanimity, immediate purification is prescribed, and the reason for that is that he is seated (there) for the protection of (his) subjects.
95. (The same rule applies to the kinsmen) of those who have fallen in a riot or a battle, (of those who have been killed) by lightning or by the king, and for cows and Brahmins, and to those whom the king wishes to be pure (in spite of impurity).
96. A king is an incarnation of the eight guardian deities of the world, the Moon, the Fire, the Sun, the Wind, Indra, the Lords of wealth and water (Kubera and Varuna) and Yama.
97. Because the king is pervaded by those lords of the world, no impurity is ordained for him for purity and impurity of mortals is caused and removed by those lords of the world."

From this it is clear that the king, the kinsmen of those who have fallen in a noble cause as defined by Manu and those whom the king chose to exempt were not affected by the normal rules of defilement. Manu's statement that the Brahmin was 'ever pure' must be understood in its usual sense of exalting the Brahmin above everything. It must not be understood to mean that the Brahmin was free from defilement. For he was not. Indeed besides being defiled by births and deaths the Brahmin also suffered defilement on grounds which did not affect the Non-Brahmins. The Manu Smriti is full of tabus and don'ts which affect only the Brahmins and which he must observe and failure to observe which makes him impure.

The idea of defilement in Manu is real and not merely notional. For he makes the food offered by the polluted person unacceptable.

Manu also prescribes the period of defilement. It varies. For the death of a Sapinda it is ten days. For children three days. For fellow students one day. Defilement does not vanish by the mere lapse of the prescribed period. At the end of the period there must be performed a purificatory ceremony appropriate to the occasion.

For the purposes of purification Manu treats the subject of defilement from three aspects : (1) Physical defilement, (2) notional or psychological defilement, and (3) ethical defilement. The rule for the purification of ethical defilement which occurs when a person entertains evil thoughts are more admonitions and exhortations. But the rites for the removal of notional and physical defilement are the same. They include the use of water, earth, cow's urine, Kusa grass and ashes. Earth, cow's urine, Kusa grass and ashes are prescribed as purificatory agents for removing physical impurities caused by the touch of inanimate objects. Water is the chief agent for the removal of notional defilement. It is used in three ways (1) sipping, (2) bath, and (3) ablution. Later on *panchagavya* became the most important agency for removing notional defilement. It consists of a mixture of the five products of the cow, namely, milk, urine, dung, curds and butter.

In Manu there is also provision for getting rid of defilement by transmission through a scapegoat namely by touching the cow or looking at the sun after sipping water.

Besides the individual pollution the Hindus believe also in territorial and communal pollution and purification very much like the system that prevailed among the early Romans. Every village has an annual *jatra*. An animal, generally a he buffalo, is purchased on behalf of the village. The animal is taken round the village and is sacrificed, the blood is sprinkled round the village and towards the end the meat is distributed among the villagers. Every Hindu, every Brahmin even though he may not be a beef eater is bound to accept his share of the meat. This is not mentioned in any of the Smritis but it has the sanction of custom which among the Hindus is so strong that it always overrides law.

## II

If one could stop here, one could well say that the notion of defilement prevalent among the Hindus is not different from that which obtained in Primitive and in Ancient Societies. But one cannot stop here. For there is another form of Untouchability observed by the Hindus which has not yet been set out. It is the hereditary Untouchability of certain communities. So vast is the list of such communities that it would be difficult for an individual with his unaided effort to compile an exhaustive list. Fortunately such a list

was prepared by the Government of India in 1935 and is attached to the Orders-in-Council issued under the Government of India Act of 1935. To this Order-in-Council there is attached a Schedule. The Schedule is divided into nine parts. One part refers to one province and enumerates the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within steps which are deemed to be Untouchables in that province either in the whole of that province or part thereof. The list may be taken to be both exhaustive and authentic. To give an idea of the vast number of communities which are regarded as hereditary Untouchables by the Hindus. I reproduce below the list given in the Order-in-Council.

## SCHEDULE

### PART 1 – MADRAS

(1) Scheduled Castes throughout the Province :—

|                   |             |                 |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Adi-Andhra.       | Gosangi.    | Paidi.          |
| Adi-Dravida.      | Haddi.      | Painda.         |
| Adi-Karnataka.    | Hasla.      | Paky.           |
| Ajila.            | Holeya.     | Pallan.         |
| Arunthuthiyar.    | Jaggali.    | Pambada.        |
| Baira.            | Jambuvulu.  | Pamidi.         |
| Bakuda.           | Kalladi.    | Panchama.       |
| Bandi.            | Kanakkan.   | Paniyan.        |
| Bariki.           | Kodalo.     | Panniandi.      |
| Battada.          | Koosa.      | Paraiyan.       |
| Bavuri            | Koraga.     | Parvan.         |
| Bellara.          | Kudumban.   | Pulayan.        |
| Bygari            | Kuravan.    | Puthirai Vanaa. |
| Chachati.         | Madari.     | Raneyar.        |
| Chakkiliyan.      | Madiga.     | Relli           |
| Chalvadi.         | Maila.      | Samagara.       |
| Chamar.           | Mala.       | Samban.         |
| Chandala.         | Mala Dasu.  | Separi          |
| Cheruman.         | Matangi.    | Semman.         |
| Dandasi.          | Moger.      | Thoti.          |
| Devendrakulathan. | Muchi.      | Tiruvahivir.    |
| Ghasi.            | Mundala.    | Valluvan.       |
| Godagali.         | Natekeyava. | Valmiki.        |
| Godari.           | Nayadi      | Vettuvan.       |
| Godda.            | Paga dai    |                 |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

(2) Scheduled Castes throughout the Provinces except in any special constituency constituted under the Government of India Act, 1935, for the election of a representative of backward areas and backward tribes to the Legislative Assembly of the Province :—

|             |               |          |
|-------------|---------------|----------|
| Arnadan.    | Kattunayakan. | Kuruman. |
| Dombo.      | Kudiya.       | Malasar. |
| Kadan.      | Kudubi.       | Mavilan. |
| Karimpalan. | Kurichchan.   | Pano.    |

### PART II.—BOMBAY

Scheduled Castes:—

(1) Throughout the Province :—

|                          |                    |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Asodi.                   | Dhor.              | Mang Garudi.             |
| Bakad.                   | Garode.            | Maghval, or Menghwar.    |
| Bhambi.                  | Halleer.           | Mini Madig.              |
| Bhangi.                  | Halsar, or Haslar. | Mukri.                   |
| Chakrawadya-Dasar.       | Hulsavar.          | Nadia.                   |
| Chalvadi.                | Holaya.            | Shenva, or Shindhava.    |
| Chambhar or Mochigar or' | Khalpa.            | Shinghdav, or Shingadya. |
| Samagar.                 | Kolcha, or Kolgha. | Sochi.                   |
| Chena-Dasaru.            | Koli-Dhor.         | Timali.                  |
| Chuhar, or Chuhra.       | Lingader.          | Turi.                    |
| Dakaleru.                | Madig, or Mang.    | Vankar.                  |
| Dhed.                    | Mahar.             | Vitholia.                |
| Dhegu-Megu.              |                    |                          |

(2) Throughout the Province except in the Ahmedabad, Kaira, Broach and Panch Mahals and Surat Districts—Mochi.

(3) In the Kanara district—Kotegar.

### PART III — BENGAL

Scheduled Castes throughout the Province :—

|          |          |           |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| Agarua   | Bhumij.  | Gonrili.  |
| Bagdi    | Bind.    | Hadi.     |
| Bahelia. | Bmjhia.  | Hajang.   |
| Baiti.   | Chamar.  | Halalkor. |
| Bauri.   | Dhenuar. | Hari.     |
| Bediya.  | Dhoba.   | Ho.       |



|           |           |                  |
|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| Beddar.   | Doai.     | Jalia Kaibartta. |
| Berua.    | Dom.      | Jhalo Malo, or   |
| Bhatiya.  | Dosadh    | Malo.            |
| Bhiumali. | Garo.     | Kadar.           |
| Bhuiya.   | Ghasi.    | Kalpahariya.     |
| Kandh.    | Lodha.    | Kan.             |
| Kandra.   | Lahor.    | Oraon.           |
| Kaora.    | Mahli.    | Paliya.          |
| Kapuria.  | Mal.      | Pan.             |
| Karenga.  | Mahar.    | Pasi.            |
| Kastha.   | Mallah.   | Patni            |
| Kaur.     | Mech.     | Pod.             |
| Khaira.   | Mehtor.   | Rabha.           |
| Khatik.   | Muchi.    | Rajbanshi.       |
| Koch.     | Munda.    | Rajwar.          |
| Konai.    | Musahar.  | Santal.          |
| Konwar.   | Nagesia.  | Sunn.            |
| Kora.     | Namasudm. | Tiyar.           |
| Kotal.    | Nat       | Tun.             |
| Lalbegi.  | Nuniya.   |                  |

#### PART IV — UNITED PROVINCES

Scheduled Castes:—

(1) Throughout the Province :—

|           |                   |                 |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Agaria.   | Chamar.           | Kharwar (except |
| Aheriya.  | Chero.            | Benbansi)       |
| Badi.     | Dabagar. Dhangar. | Khatik.         |
| Badhik.   | Dhanuk(Bhangi).   | Kol.            |
| Baheliya. | Dharikar.         | Korwa.          |
| Bajaniya. | Dhobi.            | Lalbegi.        |
| Bajgi.    | Dom.              | Majhwar.        |
| Balahar.  | Domar.            | Nat             |
| Balmiki.  | Ghaiami.          | Pankha.         |
| Banmaus.  | Ghasiya.          | Parahiya.       |
| Bansphor. | Gual.             | Pasi.           |
| Barwar.   | Habura.           | Patari.         |
| Basor.    | Hari.             | Rawat.          |
| Bawariya. | Hela.             | Saharya.        |
| Beldar.   | Khairaha.         | Sanaurhiya.     |

|          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Bengali. | Kalabaz.  | Sansiya.  |
| Berya.   | Kanjar.   | Shilpkar. |
| Bhantu.  | Kapariya. | Tharu.    |
| Bhuiya.  | Karwal.   | Turaiha.  |
| Bhuiyar. | Kharot.   |           |
| Boriya.  |           |           |

(2) Throughout the Province except in the Agra, Meerut and Rohilkhand divisions—Kori.

### PART V—PUNJAB

Scheduled Castes throughout the Province :—

|                     |                     |            |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Ad Dharmis.         | Marija, or Marecha. | Khatik.    |
| Bawaria.            | Bengali.            | Kori.      |
| Chamar.             | Baiar.              | Nat.       |
| Chuhra, or Balmiki. | Bazigar.            | Pasi.      |
| Dagi and Koli.      | Bhanjra.            | Pema.      |
| Dhumna.             | Chanal.             | Sepela.    |
| Od.                 | Dhanak.             | Siridband. |
| Sansi.              | Gagra.              | Meghi.     |
| Sarera.             | Gandhila.           | Ramdasis.  |

### PART VI.—BIHAR

Scheduled Castes:—

(1) Throughout the Province :—

|          |            |          |
|----------|------------|----------|
| Chamar.  | Halalkhor. | Mochi.   |
| Chaupal. | Hari.      | Musahar. |
| Dhobi.   | Kanjar.    | Nat.     |
| Dusadh.  | Kurariar.  | Pasi.    |
| Dom.     | Lalbegi.   |          |

(2) In the Patna and Tirhut divisions and the Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Palamau and Pumea districts :—

|          |         |         |
|----------|---------|---------|
| Bauri.   | Bhumij. | Rajwar. |
| Bhogta.  | Ghasi.  | Tun.    |
| Bhaiiya. | Pan.    |         |

(3) In the Dhanbad sub-division of the Manbhum district and the Central Manbhum general rural constituency, and the Purulia and Raghunathpur municipalities:—

Bauri.  
Bhogta.  
Bhuiya.

Ghasi.  
Pan.

Rajwar.  
Turi.

**PART VII—CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR**

| <i>Scheduled Castes</i>                                                                          | <i>Localities</i>                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Basor, or Burud,<br>Chamar,<br>Dom,<br>Ganda,<br>Mang,<br>Mehtar or Bhangi,<br>Mochi,<br>Satnami | Throughout the Province.                                                                                                                                                      |
| Audhelia                                                                                         | In the Bilaspur distict.                                                                                                                                                      |
| Bahna                                                                                            | In the Arnraoti district                                                                                                                                                      |
| Balahi, or Balai                                                                                 | In the Berar division and the Balaghat, Bhandara Betul, Chanda, Chhindwara, Hoshangabad, Jabulpore, Mandia, Nagpur, Nimar, Saugor and Wardha districts.                       |
| Bedar                                                                                            | In the Akola, Arnraoti and Buldana districts.                                                                                                                                 |
| Chadar                                                                                           | In the Bhandara and Saugor districts.                                                                                                                                         |
| Chauhan                                                                                          | In the Durg district.                                                                                                                                                         |
| Dahayat                                                                                          | In the Damoh sub-division of the Saugor district.                                                                                                                             |
| Dewar                                                                                            | In the Bilaspur, Durg and Raipur districts.                                                                                                                                   |
| Dhanuk                                                                                           | In the Saugor district, except in the Damoh sub-division thereof.                                                                                                             |
| Dhimar                                                                                           | In the Bhandara district.                                                                                                                                                     |
| Dhobi                                                                                            | In the Bhandara, Bilaspur, Raipur and Saugor districts and the Hoshangabad and Seoni-Malwa tahsils of the Hoshangabad district.                                               |
| Dohar                                                                                            | In the Berar division and the Balghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Nagpur and Wardha districts.                                                                                         |
| Ghasia                                                                                           | In the Berar division and in the Balaghat, Bhandara, Bilsaspur, Chanda, Durg, Nagpur, Raipur and Wardha districts.                                                            |
| Holiya                                                                                           | In the Balaghat and Bhandara districts.                                                                                                                                       |
| Jangam                                                                                           | In the Bhandara district.                                                                                                                                                     |
| Kaikari                                                                                          | In the Berar division, and in Bhandara, Chanda, Nagpur and Wardha districts.                                                                                                  |
| Katia                                                                                            | In the Berar division, in the Balghat, Betui, Bhandara, Bilaspur, Chanda, Durg, Nagpur, Nimar, Raipur and Wardha districts, in the Hoshangabad and Seoni-Malwa tahsils of the |

|         |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         | Hoshangabad district, in the Chhindwara district, except in the Seoni sub-division thereof, and in the Saugor district, except in the Damoh sub-division thereof. |
| Khangar | In the Bhadara, Buldhana and Saugor districts and the Hoshangabad and Sconi Malwa tahsils of the Hoshangabad district.                                            |

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Khatik          | In the Berar division, in' the Balaghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Nagpur and Wardha districts, in the Hoshangabad tahsil of the Hoshangabad district, in the Chhindwara district, except in the Seoni sub-division thereof, and in the Saugor district, except in the Damoh sub-division thereof. |
| Koli            | In the Bhandara and Chanda districts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Kori            | In the Arnraoti, Balaghat, Betui, Bhandara, Buldana, Chhindwara, Jubbulpore, Mandia, Nimar, Raipur and Saugor districts, and in the Hoshangabad district, except in the Harda and Sohagpur tahsils thereof.                                                                                |
| Kumhar          | In the Bhandara and Saugor districts and the Hoshangabad and Seoni-Malwa tahsils of the Hoshangabad district.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Madgi           | In the Berar division and in the Balaghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Nagpur and Wardha districts.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Mala            | In the Balaghat, Betui, Chhindwara, Hoshangabad, Jubbuipwe Mandla, Nimar and Saugor districts.                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Mehra or Mahar. | Throughout the Province, except in the Harda and Sohagpur tahsils of the Hoshangabad district                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Nagarchi        | In the Balaghat, Bhandara, Chhindwara, Mandla, Nagpur and Raipur districts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Ojha            | In the Balaghat, Bhandara and Mandia districts and the Hoshangabad tahsil of the Hoshangabad district                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Panka           | In the Berar division, in the Balaghat, Bhandara, Bilaspur, Chanda, Durg, Nagpur, Raipur, Saugor and Wardha districts and in the Chhindwara district, except in the Seoni subdivison thereof.                                                                                              |
| Pardhi          | In the Narsinghpura sub-division of the Hoshangabad district.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Pradhan         | In the Berar division, in the Bhandara, Chanda, Nagpur, Nimar, Raipur and Wardha districts and in the Chhindwara district, except in the Seoni sub-division thereof.                                                                                                                       |
| Rajjhar         | In the Sohagpur tahsil of the Hoshangabad                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
|  | district. |
|--|-----------|

### PART VIII – ASSAM

Scheduled Castes :-

(1) In the Assam Valley :-

|                           |          |            |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|
| Namasudra.                | Hira.    | Mehtar, or |
| Bhangi.                   |          |            |
| Kaibartta.                | Lalbegi. | Bansphor.  |
| Bania, or Brittial-Bania. |          |            |

(2) In the Surma Valley –

|                    |            |                       |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Mali, or Bhuimali. | Sutradhar. | Kaibartta, or Jaliya. |
| Dhupi, or Dhobi.   | Muchi.     | Lalbegi.              |
| Dugla, or Dholi.   | Patni.     | Mehtar, or Bhangi.    |
| Jhalo and Malo.    | Namasudra. | Bansphor.             |
| Mahara.            |            |                       |

### PART IX - ORISSA

Scheduled Castes :-

(1) Throughout the Province :-

|                                                                                               |                                                                                                                        |                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adi-Andhra.<br>Audhelia.<br>Bariki.<br>Bansor, or Burud.<br>Bavuri.<br>Chachati.              | Chamar. Chandala.<br>Dandasi.<br>Dewar.<br>Dhoba or Dhobi.<br>Ganda.                                                   | Ghusuria.<br>Godagali.<br>Godari.<br>Godra.<br>Gokha.<br>Haddi, or Hari.   |
| Irika,<br>Jaggali,<br>Kandra,<br>Katia,<br>Kela.<br>Kodalo.<br>Madari.<br>Madiga.<br>Mahuria. | Mala.<br>Mang.<br>Mangan.<br>Mehra, or Mahar.<br>Mehtar, or Bhangi.<br>Mochi or Muchi.<br>Paidi.<br>Painda.<br>Pamidi. | Panchama.<br>Panka.<br>Relli.<br>Sapari.<br>Satnami.<br>Siyal.<br>Valmiki. |

(2) Throughout the Province except in the Khondmals district, the district of

Sambalpur and the areas transferred to Orissa under the provisions of the Government of India (Constitution of Orissa) Order, 1936, from the Vizagapatam and Ganjam Agencies in the Presidency of Madras :-

Pan, or Pano.

(3) Throughout the Province except in the Khondmals district and the areas so transferred to Orissa from the said Agencies :-

Dom, or Dambo.

(4) Throughout the Province except in the district of Sambalpur :

|         |                   |       |
|---------|-------------------|-------|
| Bauro.  | Bhumij.           | Turi. |
| Bhuiya. | Ghasi, or Ghasia. |       |

(5) In the Nawapara sub-division of the district of Sambalpur :-

|       |           |          |
|-------|-----------|----------|
| Kori. | Nagarchi. | Pradhan. |
|-------|-----------|----------|

This is a very terrifying list. It includes 429 communities. Reduced to numbers it means that today there exist in India 50-60 millions of people whose mere touch causes pollution to the Hindus. Surely, the phenomenon of Untouchability among primitive and ancient society pales into insignificance before this phenomenon of hereditary Untouchability for so many millions of people, which we find in India. This type of Untouchability among Hindus stands in a class by itself. It has no parallel in the history of the world. It is unparalleled not merely by reason of the colossal numbers involved which exceed the number of great many nations in Asia and in Europe but also on other grounds.

There are some striking features of the Hindu system of Untouchability affecting the 429 Untouchable communities which are not to be found in the custom of Untouchability as observed by Non-Hindu communities, primitive or ancient.

The isolation prescribed by Non-Hindu societies as a safeguard against defilement, if it is not rational, is at least understandable. It is for specified reasons such as birth, marriage, death, etc.. But the isolation prescribed by Hindu society is apparently for no cause.

Defilement as observed by the Primitive Society was of a temporary duration which arose during particular times such as the performance of natural functions, eating, drinking, etc. or a natural crisis in the life of the individual such as birth, death, menstruation, etc. After the period of defilement was over and after the purificatory ceremonies were performed the



defilement vanished and the individual became pure and associable. But the impurity of the 50-60 millions of the Untouchables of India, quite unlike the impurity arising from birth, death, etc., is permanent. The Hindus who touch them and become polluted thereby can become pure by undergoing purificatory ceremonies. But there is nothing which can make the Untouchables pure. They are born impure, they are impure while they live, they die the death of the impure, and they give birth to children who are born with the stigma of Untouchability affixed to them. It is a case of permanent, hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse.

In the third place, Non-Hindu societies which believed in defilement isolated the individuals affected or at the most those closely connected with them. But the Untouchability among the Hindus involves the isolation of a class—a class which today numbers about 50 to 60 million people.

In the fourth place, Non-Hindu societies only *isolated* the affected individuals. They did not *segregate* them in separate quarters. The Hindu society insists on segregation of the Untouchables. The Hindu will not live in the quarters of the Untouchables and will not allow the Untouchables to live inside Hindu quarters. This is a fundamental feature of Untouchability as it is practised by the Hindus. It is not a case of social separation, a mere stoppage of social intercourse for a temporary period. It is a case of territorial segregation and of a *cordon sanitaire* putting the impure people inside a barbed wire into a sort of a cage. Every Hindu village has a ghetto. The Hindus live in the village and the Untouchables in the ghetto.

Such is the Hindu system of Untouchability. Who can deny that it is not altogether different from what is found to exist among Non-Hindu societies? That Untouchability among Hindus is a unique phenomenon is beyond question. Persons were treated by non-Hindu communities as impure but as individuals. Never a whole class was treated as impure. But their impurity was of a temporary duration and was curable by the performance of some purificatory rites. There has never been a case of permanent impurity based on the rule 'once impure always impure'. Persons were treated as impure by Non-Hindu Communities and they were even cut off from social intercourse. But there has never been a case of persons having been put into permanent segregation camps. A whole body of people have been treated as impure by Non-Hindu communities. But they were strangers outside the fold of the kindred. There has never been a case of a people treating a section of their own people as permanently and hereditarily impure.

Untouchability among Hindus is thus a unique phenomenon, unknown to humanity in other parts of the world. Nothing like it is to be found in any other society—primitive, ancient or modern. The many problems that arise out of a study of Untouchability and which call for investigation may be reduced to two

:

- (1) Why do the Untouchables live outside the village?
- (2) What made their impurity permanent, and ineradicable?

The following pages are devoted to finding answers to these two questions.

## PART II

### PROBLEM OF HABITAT

#### CHAPTER III

#### WHY DO THE UNTOUCHABLES LIVE OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE ?

THAT the Untouchables live outside the village is so notorious a fact that it must be taken to be within the cognisance even of those whose knowledge about them is not very profound. Yet, nobody has thought that this was a serious question calling for satisfactory answer. How did the Untouchables come to live outside the village? Were they declared to be Untouchables first and then deported out of the village and made to live outside? Or were they from the very beginning living outside the village and were subsequently declared to be Untouchables? If the answer is that they were living outside the village from the very beginning, there arises a further question, namely, what can be the reason for it ?

As the question of the separate settlement of the Untouchables has never been raised before, naturally there exists no theory as to how the Untouchables came to live outside the village. There is, of course, the view of the Hindu Shastras and if one wants to dignify it by calling it a theory one may do so. The Shastras of course say that the *Antyajās* should live and have their abode outside the village. For instance, 'Manu says:

- "X. 51. But the dwellings of the *Chandalas* and the *Shvapakas* shall be outside the village, they must be made *Apapatras* and their wealth (shall be) dogs and donkeys.
- X. 52. Their dress (shall be) the garments of the dead, (they shall eat) their food from broken dishes, black iron (shall be) their ornaments and they must always wander from place to place.
- X. 53. A man who fulfils a religious duty, shall not seek intercourse with them; their transactions (shall be) among themselves and their marriages with their equals.
- X. 54. Their food shall be given to them by others (than an Aryan giver) in a broken dish; at night they shall not walk about in village and in towns.

- X. 55. By day they may go about for the purpose of their work, distinguished by marks at king's command, and they shall carry out the corpses (of persons) who have no relatives; that is a settled rule.
- X. 56. By the King's order they shall always execute the criminals, in accordance with the law, and they shall take for themselves the clothes, the beds, and the ornaments of (such) criminals."

But what conclusion can one draw from these statements of the Shastras? They are capable of double interpretation. When the Shastras say that the Untouchables should stay outside the village, they may be purporting to say no more than that the Untouchables should stay where they have been staying, i.e. outside the village. This is one interpretation. The second interpretation is that those who are declared Untouchables should not be allowed to stay inside the village but should be required to go out of the village and live outside. Following up the alternate interpretations of the Shastras there are two different possibilities which call for consideration. One is that the Untouchability has nothing to do with the Untouchables living outside the village. From the very beginning they lived outside the village. Thereafter when the stigma of Untouchability fell on them they were prohibited from coming to live inside the village. The other possibility is that Untouchability has everything to do with the Untouchables, living outside the village. In other words, the Untouchables originally lived inside the village and that thereafter when the stigma of untouchability fell on them they were forced to vacate and live outside the village.

Which of the two possibilities is more acceptable?

The second possibility is on the face of it absurd and fantastic. One argument is quite enough to expose its absurdity. The phenomenon we are discussing is not confined to a single village or single area. It exists all over India. The transplantation of the Untouchables from within the village to outside the village is a vast operation. How and who could have carried on an operation of such colossal dimensions? It could not have been carried out except by the command of an Emperor having his sway over the whole of India. Even to him such a transplantation would have been impossible. But possible and impossible it can only be the work of an Emperor. Who is the Emperor to whom the credit or discredit of this task can be assigned? Obviously, India had no Emperor to perform this task. If there was no Emperor to do the transplantation, then the second possibility must be abandoned.

That those who are called Untouchables lived outside the village from the very beginning even before they became Untouchables and that they continued to live outside the village because of the supervision of untouchability at a later stage is the only possibility worth consideration. But this raises a very difficult question: Why did they live outside the village?

What made them or forced them to do so? The answer is that having regard to the factors which are known to students of Sociology to have influenced the transformation of Primitive Society into Modern Society all over the world it is only natural to suppose that the Untouchables should have from the beginning lived outside the village.

Not many will realise why this is natural without some explanation of the factors which have affected the condition of Primitive Society into Modern Society. For a clear understanding of the matter it is necessary to bear in mind that Modern Society differs from Primitive Society in two respects. Primitive Society consisted of nomadic communities while Modern Society consists of settled communities. Secondly, Primitive Society consisted of tribal communities based on blood relationship. Modern Society consists of local communities based on territorial affiliation. In other words there are two lines of evolution along which Primitive Society has proceeded before it became transformed into Modern Society. One line of evolution has led the Primitive Society to become a territorial community from being a tribal community. There can be no doubt that such a change has taken place. Clear traces of the change are to be seen in the official style of kings. Take the style of the English kings. King John was the first to call himself the king of England. His predecessors commonly called themselves kings of the English. The former represent a territorial community. The latter represent a tribal community. England was once the country which Englishmen inhabited. Englishmen are now the people who inhabit England. The same transformation can be seen to have taken place in the style of the French kings who were once called kings of the Franks and later as kings of France. The second line of evolution had led Primitive Society to become a settled community instead of the Nomadic community which it was. Here again, the change is so definite and so impressive that no illustration is required to convince anybody of its reality.

For the purpose in hand all we need is to confine ourselves to a consideration of the second line of evolution. How did Primitive Society become a settled community? The story of how Primitive Society became a settled community is too long to be detailed in a chapter-much too long to be compressed in a section thereof. It is enough to note two things. The first thing to understand is what made Primitive Society give up its nomadic life and secondly what happened in the transition from nomadic to settled life.

Primitive Society was no doubt nomadic. But it was nomadic not because of any migratory instinct. Nor was it due to any mental trait peculiar to it. It was the result of the fact that the earliest form of the wealth held by Primitive Society was cattle. Primitive Society was migratory because its wealth, namely the cattle, was migratory. Cattle went after new pastures. Primitive Society by reason of its love for cattle, therefore, went wherever its cattle carried it. Primitive Society became fixed in its abode, in other words became

a settled-community, when a new species of wealth was discovered. This new species of wealth was land. This happened when Primitive Society learned the art of farming and of cultivating land. Wealth became fixed at one place when it changed its form from cattle to land. With this change Primitive Society also became settled at the same place.

This explains why Primitive Society was at one time nomadic and what led it take to settled life.

The next thing is to note the events that have happened when Primitive Society was on the road to becoming a Settled Society. The problems which faced Primitive Society in its transition from Nomadic life to Settled life were mainly two. One confronted the Settled Community. The other confronted the Broken men. The problem that confronted the Settled community was that of its defence against the Nomadic tribes. The problem which confronted the Broken men was that of the protection and shelter. It may be desirable to elucidate how and why these problems arose.

For an understanding of the problem which confronted the Settled tribes, it is necessary to bear in mind the following facts. All tribes did not take to settled life at one and the same time. Some became settled and some remained nomadic. The second thing to remember is that the tribes were never at peace with one another. They were always at war. When all tribes were in a Nomadic state the chief causes for intra-tribal warfare were (1) stealing cattle, (2) stealing women, and (3) stealthily grazing of cattle in the pastures belonging to other tribes. When some tribes became settled, the tribes that remained nomadic found it more advantageous to concentrate their fight against the settled tribes. It was more paying than a war against other Nomadic tribes. The Nomadic tribes had come to realise that the Settled tribes were doubly wealthy. Like the Nomadic tribes, they had cattle. But in addition to cattle, they had corn which the Nomadic tribes had not and which they greatly coveted. The Nomadic tribes systematically organized raids on the Settled tribes with the object of stealing the wealth belonging to the Settled tribes. The third fact is that the Settled tribes were greatly handicapped in defending themselves against these raiders. Being engaged in more gainful occupation, the Settled tribes could not always convert their ploughs into swords. Nor could they leave their homes and go in pursuit of the raiding tribes. There is nothing strange in this. History shows that peoples with civilization but no means of defence are not able to withstand the attacks of the barbarians. This explains how and why during the transition period the Settled tribes were faced with the problem of their defence.

How the problem of the Broken men arose is not difficult to understand. It is the result of the continuous tribal warfare which was the normal life of the tribes in their primitive condition. In a tribal war it often happened that a tribe instead of being completely annihilated was defeated and routed. In many cases a defeated tribe became broken into bits. As a consequence of this

there always existed in Primitive times a floating population consisting of groups of Broken tribesmen roaming in all directions. To understand what gave rise to the problem of the Broken men it is necessary to realise that Primitive Society was fundamentally tribal in its organisation. That Primitive Society was fundamentally tribal meant two things. Firstly, every individual in Primitive Society belonged to a tribe. Nay, he must belong to the tribe. Outside the tribe no individual had any existence. He could have none. Secondly tribal organisation being based on common blood and common kinship an individual born in one tribe could not join another tribe and become a member of it. The Broken Men had, therefore, to live as stray individuals. In Primitive Society where tribe was fighting against tribe a stray collection of Broken Men was always in danger of being attacked. They did not know where to go for shelter. They did not know who would attack them and to whom they could go for protection. That is why shelter and protection became the problem of the Broken Men.

The foregoing summary of the evolution of Primitive Society shows that there was a time in the life of Primitive Society when there existed two groups- one group consisting of Settled tribes faced with the problem of finding a body of men who would do the work of watch and ward against the raiders belonging to Nomadic tribes and the other group consisting of Broken Men from defeated tribes with the problem of finding patrons who would give them food and shelter.

The next question is: How did these two groups solve their problems? Although we have no written text of a contract coming down to us from antiquity we can say that the two struck a bargain whereby the Broken Men agreed to do the work of watch and ward for the Settled tribes and the Settled tribes agreed to give them food and shelter. Indeed, it would have been unnatural if such an arrangement had not been made between the two especially when the interest of the one required the co-operation of the other.

One difficulty, however, must have arisen in the completion of the bargain, that of shelter. Where were the Broken Men to live? In the midst of the settled community or outside the Settled community? In deciding this question two considerations must have played a decisive part. One consideration is that of blood relationship. The second consideration is that of strategy. According to Primitive notions only persons of the same tribe, i.e.. of the same blood, could live together. An alien could not be admitted inside the area occupied by the homesteads belonging to the tribe. The Broken men were aliens. They belonged to a tribe which was different from the Settled tribe. That being so, they could not be permitted to live in the midst of the Settled tribe. From the strategic point of view also it was desirable that these Broken men should live on the border of the village so as to meet the raids of the hostile tribes. Both these considerations were decisive in favour of placing their quarters outside the village.

We can now return to the main question, namely, why do the Untouchables live outside the village? The answer to the question can be sought along the lines indicated above. The same processes must have taken place in India when the Hindu Society was passing from Nomadic life to the life of a settled village community. There must have been in Primitive Hindu society, Settled tribes and Broken Men. The Settled tribes founded the village and formed the village community and the Broken Men lived in separate quarters outside the village for the reason that they belonged to a different tribe and, therefore, to different blood. To put it definitely, the Untouchables were originally only Broken Men. It is because they were Broken Men that they lived outside the village.

This explains why it is natural to suppose that the Untouchables from the very beginning lived outside and that Untouchability has nothing to do with their living outside the village.

The theory is so novel that critics may not feel satisfied without further questioning. They will ask:

- (1) Is there any factual evidence to suggest that the Untouchables are Broken Men?
- (2) Is there evidence that the process of settlement suggested above has actually taken place in any country?
- (3) If Broken Men living outside the village is a universal feature of all societies, how is it that the separate quarters of the Broken Men have disappeared outside India but not in India?

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ARE THE UNTOUCHABLES BROKEN MEN ?**

To the question : Are the Untouchables in their origin only Broken Men, my answer is in the affirmative. An affirmative answer is bound to be followed by a call for evidence. Direct evidence on this issue could be had if the totems of the Touchables and the Untouchables in the Hindu villages had been studied. Unfortunately the study of the totemic organisation of the Hindus and the Untouchables has not yet been undertaken by students of anthropology. When such data is collected it would enable us to give a decisive opinion on the question raised in this Chapter. For the present, I am satisfied from such inquiries as I have made that the totems of the Untouchables of a particular village differ from the totems of the Hindus of the village.

Difference in totems between Hindus and Untouchables would be the best evidence in support of the thesis that the Untouchables are Broken Men belonging to a tribe different from the tribe comprising the village community. It may, however, be admitted that such direct evidence as has a bearing on the question remains to be collected. But facts have survived which serve as pointers and from which it can be said -that the Untouchables were Broken

men. There are two sets of such evidentiary facts.

One set of facts comprise the names *Antya*, *Antyaja* and *Antyavasin* given, to certain communities by the Hindu Shastras. They have come down from very ancient past. Why were these names used to indicate a certain class of people? There seem to be some meaning behind these terms. The words are undoubtedly derivative. They are derived from the root *Anta*. What does the word *Anta* mean? Hindus learned in the Shastras argue that it means one who is born last and as the Untouchable according to the Hindu order of Divine creation is held to be born last, the word *Antya* means an Untouchable. The argument is absurd and does not accord with the Hindu theory of the order of creation. According to it, it is the Shudra who is born last. The Untouchable is outside the scheme of creation. The Shudra is *Savarna*. As against him the Untouchable is *Avarna*, i.e. outside the *Varna* system. The Hindu theory of priority in creation does not and cannot apply to the Untouchable. In my view, the word *Antya* means not end of creation but end of the village. It is a name given to those people who lived on the outskirts of the village. The word *Antya* has, therefore, a survival value. It tells us that there was a time when some people lived inside the village and some lived outside the village and that those who lived outside the village, i.e. on the *Antya* of the village, were called *Antyaja*.

Why did some people live on the border of the village? Can there be any other reason than that they were Broken Men who were aliens and who belonged to tribes different from those who lived inside the village? I cannot see any. That this is the real reason is to be found in the use of these particular words to designate them. The use of the words *Antya*, *Antyaja* and *Antyavasin* has thus double significance. In the first place, it shows that living in separate quarters was such a peculiar phenomenon that a new terminology had to be invented to give expression to it. Secondly, the words chosen express in exact terms the conditions of the people to whom it applied namely that they were aliens.

The second set of facts which shows that the Untouchables were Broken men relates to the position of a community called the Mahars. The Mahar community is a principle Untouchable community in Maharashtra. It is the single largest Untouchable community found in Maharashtra. The following facts showing the relations between the Mahars and the Touchable Hindus are worthy of note: (1) The Mahars are to be found in every village; (2) Every village in Maharashtra has a wall and the Mahars have their quarters outside the wall; (3) The Mahars by turn do the duty of watch and ward on behalf of the village; and (4) The Mahars claim 52 rights against the Hindu villagers. Among these 52 rights the most important are:-

- (i) The right to collect food from the villagers;
- (ii) The right to collect corn from each villager at the harvest season; and



- (iii) The right to appropriate the dead animal belonging to the villagers.

The evidence arising from the position of the Mahars is of course confined to Maharashtra. Whether similar cases are to be found in other parts of India has yet to be investigated. But, if the Mahars case can be taken as typical of the Untouchables throughout India it will be accepted that there was a stage in the history of India when Broken Men belonging to other tribes came to the Settled tribes and made a bargain whereby the Broken men were allowed to settle on the border of the village, were required to do certain duties and in return were given certain rights. The Mahars have a tradition that the 52 rights claimed by them against the villagers were given to them by the Muslim kings of Bedar. This can only mean that these rights were very ancient and that the kings of Bedar only confirmed them.

These facts although meagre do furnish some evidence in support of the theory that the Untouchables lived outside the village from the very beginning. They were not deported and made to live outside the village *because* they were declared Untouchables. They lived outside the village from the beginning *because* they were Broken Men who belonged to a tribe different from the one to which the Settled tribe belonged.

The difficulty in accepting this explanation arises largely from the notion that the Untouchables were always Untouchables. This difficulty will vanish if it is borne in mind that there was a time when the ancestors of the present day Untouchables were not Untouchables *vis-a-vis* the villagers but were merely Broken Men, no more and no less, and the only difference between them and the villagers was that they belonged to different tribes.

## CHAPTER V

### ARE THERE PARALLEL CASES ?

ARE there any cases known to history of Broken Men living outside the village? To this question it is possible to give an affirmative answer. Fortunately for us we have two reported cases which show that what is said to have occurred in India particularly has also actually occurred elsewhere. The countries wherein such a development has actually been reported to have taken place are Ireland and Wales.

The organisation of the Irish village in primitive times can be seen from the Brehon Laws of Ireland. Some idea of it as revealed in these Laws may be obtained from the following summary given by Sir Henry Maine. Says Sir Henry Maine\* :-

"The Brehon Law discloses a stage when the tribe has long been settled, in all probability upon the tribal territory. It is of sufficient size and importance to constitute a political unit, and possibly at its apex is one of the

numerous chieftain whom the Irish records call kings. The primary assumption is that the whole of the tribal territory belongs to the whole of the tribe, but in fact large portions of it have been permanently appropriated to minor bodies of tribesmen. A part is allotted in special way to the chief as appurtenant to his office, and descends from chief to chief according to a special rule of succession. Other portions are occupied by fragments of the tribe, some of which are under minor chiefs while others, though not strictly ruled by a chief, have somebody of noble class to act as their representative. All the unappropriated tribelands are in a more special way the property of the tribe as a whole, and no portion can theoretically be subjected to more than a temporary occupation. Such occupations are, however, frequent and among the holders of tribeland, on these terms, are groups of men calling themselves tribesmen, but being in reality associations formed by contract, chiefly for the purpose of pasturing cattle. Much of the common tribeland is not occupied at all, but constitutes, to use the English expression, the 'waste' of the tribe. Still this waste is constantly brought under tillage or permanent pasture by settlements of tribesmen, and upon it *cultivators and servile states are permitted to squat, particularly towards the border*. It is part of the territory over which the authority of the chief tends steadily to increase, and here it is that he settles his 'fuidhir' or stranger-tenants *a very important class-the outlaws and 'broken men' from other tribes who come to him for protection, and who are only connected with their new tribe by their dependence on its chief, and through the responsibility which he incurs for them*".

Who were the Fuidhirs? According to Sir Henry Maine the Fuidhirs were:

"Strangers or fugitives from other territories, men in fact, who had broken the original tribal bond which gave them a place in the community, and who had to obtain and then as best they might in a new tribe and new place. Society was violently disordered. The result was probably to fill the country with 'Broken Men' and such men could only find a home and protection by becoming Fuidhir tenants.

"The Fuidhir was not a tribesman but an alien. In all societies cemented together by kinship the position of the person who has lost or broken the bond of union is always extraordinarily miserable. He has not only lost his natural place in them but they have no room for him anywhere else".

## II

Now as to Wales. The organisation of the Welsh village in primitive times is described by Mr. Seebhom. According to Mr. Seebhom a village in Wales was

a collection of homesteads. The homesteads were separated into two groups, the homesteads of the Free-tenants and the homesteads of the Unfree-tenants. Mr. Seebhom says that this separation in habitation was a common feature of the primitive village in Wales. Why were these Unfree-tenants made to live in a separate and detached place? The reason for this separation is explained by Mr. Seebhom in the following terms :-

"At first sight there is a great confusion in the class of men mentioned in the ancient Welsh Laws— of tribesmen, *Uchelore bryre* and *innate boneddings* : of non-tribesmen, *talogo Aillte*, *Alltude*, etc. The confusion vanishes only when the principle underlying the constitution of tribal society is grasped. And this principle would apparently be a very simple one if could be freed from the complications of conquest and permanent settlement of land from the inroads of foreign law, custom, and nomenclature. To begin with there can be little doubt that the ruling principle underlying the structure of tribal society was that of blood relationship among the free tribesmen. No one who did not belong to a kindred could be a member of the tribe, which was in fact, a bundle of Welsh kindred. Broadly then under the Welsh tribal system there were two classes, those of Cymric blood— and those who were stranger in blood. There was a deep, if not unpassable, gulf between these two classes quite apart from any question of land or of conquest. It was a division in blood and it soon becomes apparent that the tenacity with which the distinction was maintained was at once one of the strong distinctive marks of the tribal system and one of the main secrets of its strength."

### III

This description of the organisation of the Irish and the Welsh villages in the primitive times leave no doubt that the case of the Untouchables of India is not the only case of a people living outside the village. It proves that in it was exhibited a universal phenomenon, and was marked by the following features :

1. That in primitive times the Village Settlement consisted of two parts. One part occupied by the community belonging to one tribe and another part occupied by the Broken Men of different tribes.
2. The part of the settlement occupied by the tribal community was regarded as the village proper. The Broken Men lived in the outskirts of the village.
3. The reason why the Broken Men lived outside the village was because they were aliens and did not belong to the tribal community.

The analogy between the Untouchables of India and the Fuidhirs of Ireland and the Alltudes of Wales is complete. The Untouchables lived outside the village for the same reason for which the Fuidhirs and Alltudes had to live outside the village in Ireland and Wales. It is, therefore, clear that what is said about the Untouchables on the issue of their living outside the village is not without a parallel elsewhere.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **HOW DID SEPARATE SETTLEMENTS FOR BROKEN MEN DISAPPEAR ELSEWHERE ?**

THAT the Fuidhirs of Ireland and the Alltudes of Wales were Broken Men is true. That they lived in separate quarters is also a fact. But it is also true that the separate quarters of those Broken Men disappeared and they became part of the Settled tribe and were absorbed in it. This is somewhat strange. The Broken Men according to the theory set out before were given quarters outside the village because they belonged to a different tribe and, therefore, to different blood. How is it then that they were absorbed by the tribe later on? Why such a thing did not happen in India? These are questions which are natural and which call for an answer.

The question is integrally connected with the process of evolution through which Primitive Society came to be transferred into Modern Society. As has already been said this evolution has proceeded along two different lines. One marked the transformation of Primitive Society from Nomadic into a settled community. The other marked the transformation of Primitive Society from tribal into a territorial community. The question with which we are immediately concerned relates to the second line of evolution. For it is the substitution of common territory for common blood as the bond of union that is responsible for the disappearance of the separate quarters of the Broken Men. Why did Primitive Society substitute common territory for common blood as the bond of union? This is a question for which there is no adequate explanation. The origin of the change is very-obscure. How the change was brought about is however quite clear.

At some stage there came into being in Primitive Society a rule whereby a non-tribesman could become a member of the tribe and become absorbed in it as a kindred. It was known as a rule of ennoblement. This rule was that if a non-tribesman lived next to the tribe or married within a tribe for a given number of generations he became their kindred Mr. Seebhom gives the following rules for a non-tribesman becoming a tribesman as it was found in the Welsh village system.

- (1) Residence in Cymru (Wales) according to the tradition of South Wales made the descendant of a stranger at last, a Cymru, but not until continued to the ninth generation.
- (2) Intermarriage with innate Cymraeses generation after generation made the descendent of a stranger an innate Cymru in the *fourth* generation. In other -words, the original stranger's great grandson, whose blood was at least seven-eighths Cymric was allowed to attain the right to claim the privileges of a tribesman.

Should not such a thing have happened in India? It could have-indeed it should have. For a rule similar to that which existed in Ireland and Wales also existed in India . It is referred to by Manu. In Chapter X, verses 64-67, he says that a Shudra can be a Brahmin for seven generations (if he marries) within the Brahmin Community. The ordinary rule of *Chaturvarna* was that a Shudra could never become a Brahmin. A Shudra was born a Shudra and could not be made a Brahmin. But this rule of antiquity was so strong that Manti had to apply rule of Untouchability to the Shudra. It is obvious that if this rule had continued to operate in India, the Broken Men of India would have been absorbed in the village community and their separate quarters would have ceased to exist.

Why did this not happen? The answer is that the notion of Untouchability supervened and perpetuated difference between kindred and non-kindred, tribesmen and non-tribesmen in another form; namely; between Touchables and Untouchables. It is this new factor which prevented the amalgamation taking place in the way in which it took place in Ireland and Wales, with the result that the system of separate quarters has become a perpetual and a permanent feature of the Indian village.

### **PART III**

#### **OLD THEORIES OF THE ORIGIN OF UNTOUCHABILITY**

##### **CHAPTER VII**

#### **RACIAL DIFFERENCE AS THE ORIGIN OF UNTOUCHABILITY**

WHAT is the origin of Untouchability? As has been said the field is quite unexplored. No student of Sociology has paid any attention to it. Writers, other than Sociologists, who have written about India and her people have been content with merely recording the custom of Untouchability with varying degrees of disapprobation and leaving it at that. So far as my researches go, I have come across only one author who has attempted to explain how

Untouchability has come about. It is Mr. Stanley Rice\*. According to Mr. Rice-

*There is a strong probability that the outcasts were the survivors of the conquered peoples, who, as caste tended to coincide with occupation, became the drum-beating, leather-working, and farm labouring classes to which as serfs they had been relegated from early times. They were not the races conquered by the Aryans; the Paraiyans belonged to the aborigines who were conquered by the Dravidians and being of a different race they were not admitted to the totem of similar clans with which marriage is always intimately connected, since that would have led to free intercourse and the gradual degradation of race. But this prohibition cannot have been absolute; there are always exceptions. In the course of the centuries, some forty or more, the inevitable miscegenation may very well have obliterated the racial distinctions between aboriginal and early Dravidian. These people have been admitted to a sort of lowly participation in the Hindu system in the atmosphere of which they have lived for so long, for Hinduism is at once the most tolerant and intolerant of creeds. It does not proselytize; you cannot become a Hindu as you can become a Mussalman, and those within the fold are liable to the most rigid restrictions. But it has always been ready to embrace aboriginal tribes who are willing to submit to its laws, though it may assign to them a very lowly place and they have always been kept at a distance and have been excluded from the temples. It would seem, therefore, that anthropological arguments are in any case not conclusive when we consider these factors which must have profoundly modified the original racial characteristics and must have changed their outlook. Thus the Dravidians applied to the Paraiyans the same test which the Aryans are assumed to have applied to the conquered inhabitants. They reduced them to the position of serfs and assigned to them those duties which it was thought beneath their own dignity to perform. Nor was marriage the only consideration. The disabilities of the Paraiyans were due also- and to an even greater degree- to the mystical qualities inherent in Tabu. To admit such a man to the totem family was not only contrary to the social order; it would bring upon the clan the anger of their particular god. But to admit him to the worship of the god within the sacred precincts of a temple was to call down authentic fire from Heaven, whereby they would be consumed. It would be sacrilege of the same kind as the offering of unconsecrated or unorthodox fire by Korah, Dathan and Abhiram. But though debarred from taking an active part in worship, the Paraiyans might yet do the menial services connected with it, provided that they did not entail the pollution of the sacred building. In Christian terminology the Paraiyan, although he could neither officiate at the altar, nor preach a sermon nor even be one of the congregation, might still ring the bell- on one condition. He could not regard himself as of the communion; he was, in fact, ex-communicate. And as such, he was ceremonially unclean. No washing with water, no cleansing*

ceremony, could remove that stain which was indelibly fixed by the operation of Tabu. To touch him, to have any dealings with him save as it were, at arm's length, was by a sort of contagious magic a defilement. You could employ him to till your field because that entailed no contact of any kind, beyond giving an order, you need have no further communication with him. The seal of pollution was set on his forehead; it was inherent in him as surely as the blood in his veins. And so from being the vile, degraded fellow which Indian opinion had made him, he became viler and more degraded from the kinds of occupation left open to him."

The theory of Mr. Rice really divides itself into two parts. For, according to him, the origin of untouchability is to be found in two circumstances—Race and Occupation. Obviously, they require separate consideration. This Chapter will be devoted to an examination of his theory of racial difference as the origin of untouchability.

The racial theory of Mr. Rice contains two elements :-

- (1) That the Untouchables are non-Aryan, non-Dravidian aboriginals; and
- (2) That they were conquered and subjugated by the Dravidians.

This theory raises the whole question of the invasions of India by foreign invaders, the conquests made by them and the social and cultural institutions that have resulted therefrom. According to Mr. Rice, there have been two invasions of India. First is the invasion of India by the Dravidians. They conquered the non-Dravidian aborigines, the ancestors of the Untouchables, and made them Untouchables. The second invasion is the invasion of India by the Aryans. The Aryans conquered the Dravidians. He does not say how the conquering Aryans treated the conquered Dravidians. If pressed for an answer he might say they made them Shudras. So that we get a chain. The Dravidians invaded India and conquered the aborigines and made them Untouchables. After Dravidians came the Aryans. The Aryans conquered the Dravidians and made them Shudras. The theory is too mechanical, a mere speculation and too simple to explain a complicated set of facts relating to the origin of the Shudras and the Untouchables.

When students of ancient Indian history delve into the ancient past they do often come across four names, the Aryans, Dravidians, Dasas and Nagas. What do these names indicate? This question has never been considered. Are these names Aryans, Dravidians, Dasas and Nagas the names of different races or are they merely different names for a people of the same race? The general assumption is that they are different races. It is an assumption on which theories like that of Mr. Rice, which seek to explain the social structure of the Hindu Society, particularly its class basis, are built. Before such a theory is accepted it is necessary to examine its foundations.

Starting with the Aryans it is beyond dispute that they were not a single homogeneous people. That they were divided into two sections is beyond dispute. It is also beyond dispute that the two had different cultures. One of them may be called Rig Vedic Aryans and the other the Atharva Vedic Aryans. Their cultural cleavage appears to be complete. The Rig Vedic Aryans believed in Yajna. The Atharva Vedic Aryans believed in the Magis. Their mythologies were different. The Rig Vedic Aryans believed in the Deluge and the creation of their race from Manu. The Atharva Vedic Aryans did not believe in Deluge but believed in the creation of their race from Brahma or Prajapati. Their literary developments also lay along different paths. The Rig Vedic Aryans produced Brahmanas, Sutras and Aranyakas. The Atharva Vedic Aryans produced the Upanishads. Their cultural conflict was so great that the Rig Vedic Aryans would not for a long time admit the sanctity of the Atharva Veda nor of the Upanishads and when they did recognize it they called it Vedanta which contrary to the current meaning of the word—namely, essence of the Vedas—originally meant something outside the boundary of the Vedas and, therefore, not so sacred as the Vedas and regarded its study as Anuloma. Whether these two sections of Aryans were two different races we do not know. We do not know whether the word Aryan is a term indicative of race. Historians have therefore made a mistake in proceeding on the assumption that the Aryans were a separate race.

A greater mistake lies in differentiating the Dasas from the Nagas. The Dasas are the same as Nagas. Dasas is merely another name for Nagas. It is not difficult to understand how the Nagas came to be called Dasas in the Vedic literature. Dasa is a Sanskritized form of the Indo-Iranian word Dahaka. Dahaka was the name of the king of the Nagas. Consequently, the Aryans called the Nagas after the name of their king Dahaka, which in its Sanskrit form became Dasa a generic name applied to all the Nagas.

Who were the Nagas? Undoubtedly they were non-Aryans. A careful study of the Vedic literature reveals a spirit of conflict, of a dualism, and a race for superiority between two distinct types of culture and thought. In the Rig Veda, we are first introduced to the Snake-god in the form of Ahi Vitra, the enemy of the Aryan god Indra. Naga, the name under which the Snake-god was to become so famous in later days, does not appear in early Vedic literature. Even when it does for the first time in the Satapatha Brahmana (X1.2,7,12), it is not clear whether a great snake or a great elephant is meant. But this does not conceal the nature of Ahi Vitra, since he is described always in Rig Veda as the serpent who lay around or hidden in waters, and as holding a full control over the waters of heaven and earth alike.

It is also evident from the hymns that refer to Ahi Vitra, that he received no worship from the Aryan tribes and was only regarded as an evil spirit of considerable power who must be fought down.

The mention of the Nagas in the Rig Veda shows that the Nagas were a



very ancient people. It must also be remembered that the Nagas were in no way an aboriginal or uncivilised people. History shows a very close association by intermarriage between the Naga people with the Royal families of India. The Devagiri record of the Kadamba king Krisnavarma connects the beginning of the Kadamba-kula with the Nagas. The Royakota grant of 9th Century A.D.

mentions the marriage of Asvathama with a Nagi and the foundation of the Pallava line by Skandasishya, the issue of this marriage. Virakurcha, who according to another Pallava inscription dated in the 9th century A.D. was the ruler of the dynasty, is also mentioned in the same inscription as having married a Nagi and obtained from her the insignia of royalty. The marriage of Gautamiputra, the son of the Vakataka king Pravarasena, with the daughter of the Bharasiva king Bhava Naga, is a historical fact. So is the marriage of Chandragupta II with princess Kuvera Naga 'of Naga Kula'. A Tamil poet asserts that Kokkilli, an early Chola king, had married a Naga princess. Rajendra Chola is also credited to have won 'by his radiant beauty the hand of the noble daughter of Naga race'. The Navasahasanka Charita describes the marriage of the Paramara king Sindhuraja (who seems to have reigned towards the early part of the 10th Century A. D.) with the Naga princess Sasiprabha, with such exhaustive details in so matter-of-fact-a-manner as to make us almost feel certain that there must have been some historical basis for this assertion. From the Harsha inscription of V. S. 1030-973 A.D. we know that Guvaka I, who was the sixth king in the genealogy upwards from Vigharaja Chahamana and thus might be supposed to have been ruling towards the middle of the 9th Century was "famous as a hero in the assemblies of the Nagas and other princes." Sanatikara of the Bhaumn dynasty of Orissa, one of whose dates was most probably 921 A.D., is mentioned in an inscription of his son as having married Tribhuana Mahadevi of the Naga family.

Not only did the Naga people occupy a high cultural level but history shows that they ruled a good part of India. That Maharashtra is the home of the Nagas goes without saying. Its people and its kings were Nagas.

That Andhradesa and its neighbourhood were under the Nagas during the early centuries of the Christian era is suggested by evidence from more sources than one. The Satavahanas, and their successors, the Chutu Kula Satakarnis drew their blood more or less from the Naga stock. As Dr. H.C. Roy Chaudhri has pointed out, the Dvatrima satpukalitta represents Salivahana, the mythological representative of the Satavahana dynasty, as of mixed Brahmana and the Naga origin. This is amply attested to by the typical Naga names which occur in their dynastic lists. That the Naga grew to be very powerful towards the end of the Satavahana rule is also proved by a number of facts. A chief called Skandanaga is found ruling the Bellary district, in the reign of Pulumavi, the last king of the main Satavahana line. Secondly, Naga

Mulanika the daughter of a Chutu king, is mentioned as making a gift of a Naga, together with her son, who is called Sivakanda-Naga-Sri. All the known kings of this line bear the same name and thus prove a close association with the Nagas. Thirdly, the name of Uracapura, the capital of Soringoi, suggests not an isolated reign of one Naga king but a Naga Settlement in that locality of tolerably long duration.

From Buddhist tradition of Ceylon and Siam we also know that there was a Naga country called Majerika near the Diamond Sands, i.e. Karachi

Then during the third and early part of the 4th Century A.D. Northern India also was ruled by a number of Naga kings is clearly proved by Puranic as well as numismatic and epigraphic evidence. Three independent groups of Vidisa, Campavati or Padmavati and Mathura are distinctly mentioned in such a way as to leave little doubt of their importance. The name Bhava Naga, the only known king of the Bharasiva dynasty, also seems to connect him with the Nagas. It is not possible to enter here into a discussion of the coins of the second group, or the question of identification of Achyuta Ganapati Naga or Nagasena of Allahabad Pillar inscription with these Puranic Naga kings. Of all the Nagas referred to in ancient Indian History, the North Indian Naga houses of the 4th century A.D. stand out as the most prominent and historically the most tangible. We do not know whether Nagabhatta and his son Maharaja Mohesvara Naga of the Lahore Copper Seal belonged to any of these three groups or formed a separate Naga family by themselves. But all this sufficiently justifies the conclusion of Dr. C. C. Roy Chaudhari that the Kushana kingdom of Northern India disappeared in the 4th Century A.D. having been conquered by the Nagas. These Nagas must have been ruling over different portions of Uttarapatha till they were themselves swept away before the conquering arms of Samudragupta.

As late as the time of Skandagupta, however we find one Sarvanaga as the governor of Antarvedi in the neighbourhood of Saurashtra and Bharukaccha especially, the Nagas seem to have held a prominent position down to the 6th Century A.D. From the Junagadh inscription Skandagupta appears to have dealt severely with a Naga rebellion. In 570 A. D. Dadda I Gurjara uprooted the Nagas who have been identified with the jungle tribes ruled over by Brihul I of Broach. Dhruvasena 11's grant of G.S. 334 (645 A.D.) also mentions as Dutaka the Pramatri Srinaga

The next important revival of the Nagas particularly in Central India seems to date about the 9th Century A.D. In 800 A.D. Maharaja Tivaradeva of Sripura in Kosala most probably defeated a Naga tribe. Sometime after this period, we also note two references to Nagas in the inscription of Bengal. The Ramganj record of Mahamandalika Isvara Ghosha introduces us to a Ghosha Naga family of Dhekkari, which was to be assigned to 11th century A.D. The Bhuvaneshvara Prasasti of Bhatta Bhavadeva, the minister of Harivarmadeva in 12th century A.D. also refers to destruction of Naga kings by him. The

Ramacharita mentions the conquest of Utkala, the kingdom of Bhava-Bhushana-Santati, by Ramapala, but it is not clear whether in this case the Nagas or the Chandras were meant. The greater probability would however lie in favour of the former, since they were the more well known.

It was in the period 10th-12th Century A.D. that the different branches of the Sendraka, Sinda, or Chindaka family, which called themselves lords of Bhogavati and Nagavarnsi gradually spread themselves over different portions of Central India, particularly Baster. The Nagattaras of Begur, too, appear in an inscription of the 10th Century A.D. as having fought against king Viramahendra, on behalf of the W. Ganga king Ereyappa and being distinguished for bravery in the fight. If the evidence of Navashanka Charita is accepted, then the Naga king, whose daughter Sasiprabha was married to Sindhuraja Paramara, must also have been ruling in Ratnavad on the Narmada at about this period.

Who are the Dravidians? Are they different from the Nagas? Chare they two different names for a people of the same race? The popular view is that the Dravidians and Nagas are names of two different races. This statement is bound to shock many people. Nonetheless, it is a fact that the term Dravidians and Nagas are merely two different names for the same people.

It is not to be denied that very few will be prepared to admit the proposition that the Dravidians and Nagas are merely two different names for the same people and fewer that the Dravidians as Nagas occupied not merely South India but that they occupied the whole of India- South as well as North. Nonetheless, these are historical truths.

Let us see what the authorities have to say on the subject. This is what Mr. Dikshitar, a well-known South Indian scholar, has to say on the subject in his Paper on *South India in the Ramayana* :

"The Nagas, another tribe-semi-divine in character, with their totems as serpent, spread throughout India, from Taksasila in the North-West to Assam in the North-East and to Ceylon and South India in the South. At one time they must have been powerful. Contemporaneous with the Yakwas or perhaps subsequent to their fall as a political entity, the Nagas rose to prominence in South India. Not only parts of Ceylon but ancient Malabar were the territories occupied by the ancient Nagas ..... In the Tamil classics of the early centuries after Christ, we hear frequent references to Naganadu..... Remnants of Naga worship are still lingering in Malabar, and the temple in Nagercoil in South Travancore is dedicated to Naga worship even today. All that can be said about them is that they were a sea-faring tribe. Their womenfolk were renowned for their beauty. Apparently the Nagas had become *merged* with the Cheras who rose to power and prominence at the commencement of the Christian Era."

Further light is thrown on the subject by C. F. Oldham who has made a deep study of it. According to Mr. Oldham

"The Dravidian people have been divided, from ancient times, into Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas. Chera, or Sera (in old Tamil Sarai) is the Dravidian equivalent for Naga; Cheramandala, Nagadwipa, or the Naga country. This seems to point distinctly to the Asura origin of the Dravidians of the South. But in addition to this there still exists, widely spread over the Ganges valley, a people who call themselves Cherus or Seoris, and who claim descent from the serpent gods. The Cherus are of very ancient race; they are believed to have once held a great portion of the valley of the Ganges, which, as we have already seen, was occupied in very early times by Naga tribes. The Cherus appear to have been gradually ousted from their lands, during the troublous times of the Mohammedan invasions, and they are now poor and almost landless. There can be little doubt that these people are kinsmen of the Dravidian Cheras.

The Cherus have several peculiar customs and amongst them one which seems to connect them with the Lichhavis, as well as with the Newars of Nepal. This is the election of a raja for every five or six houses, and his investiture, in due form, with the tilak or royal frontal mark. Both Lichhavis and Newars had many customs in common with the Dravidians of the South. Each venerated the serpent, Karkotaka Naga being to Nepal what Nila Naga was to Kashmir. A Naga, too, was the tutelary deity of Vaisali, the Lichhavi capital. The marital relations of Newars and Lichhavis closely resembled those of the Tamil people, and go far to show a common origin.

Property amongst the Newars descended in the female line, as it (Mice did amongst the Arattas, Bahikas or Takhas of the Punjab, whose sisters' sons, and not their own, were their heirs. This is still a Dravidian custom. In short, a recent Dravidian writer, Mr. Balakrishna Nair, says that his people 'appear to be, in nearly every particular, the kinsfolk of the Newars.

Besides all this, however, there are other links connecting the Naga people of the South with those of the north of India. In an inscription discovered by Colonel Tod at Kanswah near the river Chambal, a Raja, called Salindra, 'of the race of Sarya, a tribe renowned amongst the tribes of the mighty' is said to be ruler of Takhya.

This was evidently the Takhya or Takha kingdom of the Punjab, which was visited by Hiou-en-Tsiang, and which has been already referred to. It seems, therefore, that the Naga people of Takhya were known also by the name of Sarya.

Again, in the outer Himalaya, between the Sudej and Beas Valleys, is a tract of country called Sara, or Seoraj. In this district the Naga demigods are the chief deities worshipped.

There is another Seoraj in the Upper Chinab Valley, and this too is occupied by a Naga worshipping people.

The name Saraj, or Seoraj, appears to be the same as the Sarya of Colonel

Tod's inscription and as Scori, which is the alternative name of the Cherus of the Ganges Valley. It also seems to be identical with Sarai, which we have already seen, is the old Tamil name for the Chera or Naga. Apparently, therefore, the Saryas or Takhya, the Saraj people of the Sutlej Valley, the Scons or Cherus of the valley of the Ganges, and the Cheras, Seras, or Kerakis at Southern India, are but different branches of the same Naga-worshipping people.

It may be noted, too, that in some of the Himalayan dialects, Kira or Kiri means a serpent. This name, from which was perhaps derived the term Kirate so often applied to the people of the Himalayas, is found in the Rajatarangini, where it is applied to a people in or near Kashmir. The Kiras are mentioned by Varaha Mihira, and in a copper plate published by Prof. Kielhom.

An inscription at the Baijnath temple in the Kangra valley gives Kiragrams as the then name of the place. This, in the local dialect, would mean the village of serpents. The Naga is still a popular deity at Baijnath, and throughout the neighbouring country. The term Kira is thus an equivalent for Naga, and it can scarcely be doubted that the serpent-worshipping Kiras of the Himalayas were closely related to the Dravidian Keras, Cheras or Keralas of the South.

Similarity of name is not always to be trusted, but here we have something more. These people, whose designation is thus apparently the same, are all of Solar race; they all venerate the hooded serpent; and they all worship, as ancestors, the Naga demi-gods.

From the foregoing it would seem tolerably certain that the Dravidians of Southern India were of the same stock as the Nagas or Asuras of the North."

It is thus clear that the Nagas and Dravidians are one and the same people. Even with this much of proof, people may not be found ready to accept the thesis. The chief difficulty in the way of accepting it lies in the designation of the people of South India by the name Dravidian. It is natural for them to ask why the term Dravidian has come to be restricted to the people of South India if they are really Nagas. Critics are bound to ask : If the Dravidians and the Nagas are the same people, why is the name Nagas not used to designate people of South India also. This is no doubt a puzzle. But it is a puzzle which is not beyond solution. It can be solved if certain facts are borne in mind.

The first thing to be borne in mind is the situation regarding language. Today the language of the Southern India differs from that of the people of Northern India. Was this always so? On this question the observations of Mr. Oldham are worth attention.

"It is evident that the old Sanskrit grammarians considered the language of the Dravidian countries to be connected with the vernaculars of northern India; and that, in their opinion, it was especially related to the speech of those people who, as we have seen, were apparently descendants of the

Asura tribes. Thus, in the 'Shahasha Chandrika', Lakshmidhara says that the Paisachi language is spoken in the Paisachi countries of Pandya, Kckaya, Vahlika, Sahya, Nepala, Kuntala, Sudesha, Bhota, Gandhara, Haiva and Kanoj; and that these are the Paisachi countries. Of all the vernacular dialects, the paisachi is said to have contained the smallest infusion of Sanskrit.

That the Asuras originally spoke a language which differed from that of the Aryas seems evident. Several passages are quoted by Prof. Muir, from the Rig Veda, in which the word 'mridavach' is applied to the speech of the Asuras (R.vi.74, 2; v. vi.3; v.vii.6). Of these passages. Professor Muir observes: "The word mridavach, which I have translated "injuriously speaking", is explained by Sayana as meaning "one whose organs of speech are destroyed". The original meaning of the expression was, doubtless that the language of the Asuras was more or less unintelligible to the Aryas. The same explanation will apply to another passage in the Rig Veda, where it is said : 'May we (by propitiating Indra) conquer the ill speaking man.'

From the Satapatha Brahmana we find that 'the Asuras, being deprived of speech, were undone, crying. 'He lava', 'He lava'. Such was the unintelligible speech which they uttered. And he who speaks thus is a Miecha. Hence, let no Brahman speak barbarous language, since such is the speech of Asuras

We learn from Manu, that 'those tribes who are outside of the classes produced from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of Brahman, whether they speak the language of the Miechas or of the Aryas, are called Dasyus., In the time of Manu; therefore, the Aryan language and that of the Miechas or Asuras were both in use. At the period described in the Mahabharata, however, the Asura language must have almost died out amongst the Aryanized tribes; as Vidura addressed Yudhishtira in the Miecha tongue, so as to be unintelligible to all except Yudhishtira.

At a later period than this, however, the grammarian Rama Tarkavagisa refers to 'those who speak like Nagas.' It would seem, therefore, that the unregenerate Asuras retained the language, as well as the religion and customs, of their forefathers long after their converted brethren had discarded them. It was evidently amongst these unregenerate tribes that the Paisachi dialects were in use; and amongst these tribes, as we have just seen, were the Dravidian Pandyas

This view, that the Tamil and cognate tongues were founded upon the ancient Asura speech, is very strongly confirmed by the fact that the language of the Brahuis, a tribe on the borders of Sind, has been found to be very closely allied to them. Indeed, Dr. Caldwell says: 'The Brahui (language) enables us to trace the Dravidian race, beyond the Indus, to the southern confines of Central Asia. This country, as I have already pointed out, was the

home of the Asuras or Nagas, to which race apparently belonged the founders of the Dravidian kingdoms.'

Taking into consideration all the evidence which has been brought forward, the only possible conclusion seems to be, that the Dravidians, of the south of India, were of the same stock as the Asuras or Nagas of the North."

The second thing to be borne in mind is that the word 'Dravida' is not an original word. It is the Sanskritized form of the word Tamil'.

The original word Tamil' when imported into Sanskrit became *Damita* and later on *Damilla* became Dravida. The word Dravida is the name of the language of the people and does not denote the race of the people. The third thing to remember is that Tamil or Dravida was not merely the language of South India but before the Aryans came it was the language of the whole of India and was spoken from Kashmere to Cape Camorin. In fact, it was the language of the Nagas throughout India. The next thing to note is the contact between the Aryan and the Nagas and the effect it produced on the Nagas and their language. Strange as it may appear the effect of this contact on the Nagas of North India was quite different from the effect it produced on the Nagas of South India. The Nagas in North India gave up Tamil which was their mother tongue and adopted Sanskrit in its place. The Nagas in South India retained Tamil as their mother tongue and did not adopt Sanskrit the language of the Aryans. If this difference is borne in mind it will help to explain why the name Dravida came to be applied only for the people of South India. The necessity for the application of the name Dravida to the Nagas of Northern India had ceased because they had ceased to speak the Dravida language. But so far as the Nagas of South India are concerned not only the propriety of calling them Dravida had remained in view of their adherence to the Dravida language but the necessity of calling them Dravida had become very urgent in view of their being the only people speaking the Dravida language after the Nagas of the North had ceased to use it. This is the real reason why the people of South India have come to be called Dravidians.

The special application of the use of the word Dravida for the people of South India must not, therefore, obscure the fact that the Nagas and Dravidas are the one and the same people. They are only two different names for the same people. Nagas was a racial or cultural name and Dravida was their linguistic name.

Thus the Dasas are the same as the Nagas and the Nagas are the same as the Dravidians. In other words what we can say about the races of India is that there have been at the most only two races in the field, the Aryans and the Nagas. Obviously the theory of Mr. Rice must fall to the ground. For it postulates three races in action when as a matter of fact we see that there are only two.

## II

Granting however that there was a third aboriginal race living in India before the advent of the Dravidians, can it be said that these pre-Dravidian aboriginals were the ancestors of the present day Untouchables of India? There are two tests we can apply to find the truth. One is the anthropometric test and the other is the ethnological. Considered in the light of the anthropometric characteristics of the Indian people Prof. Ghurye has something very striking to say in his volume on 'Caste and Race in India' from which the following is an extract:

"Taking the Brahmin of the United Provinces as the typical representative of the ancient Aryans we shall start comparisons with him. If we turn to the table of differential indices we find that he shows a smaller differential index as compared with the Chuhra and the Khatri of the Punjab than with any caste from the United Provinces except the Chhatri. The differential index between the Khatri and the Chuhra is the only slightly less than that between the Brahmin of the United Provinces and the Chuhra of the Punjab. This means that the Brahmin of the United Provinces has closer physical affinities with the Chuhra and the Khatri of the Punjab than with any caste from his own province except the very high caste of the Chhatri..... The reality of this close affinity between the United Provinces Brahmin and the Punjab Chuhra is more clearly brought out if we look at the table of differential indices between the United Provinces Brahmin and the Brahmins of other regions. Even the differential index between the United Provinces Brahmin and the Bihar Brahmins, who from what we know about the history of spread of the Aryan culture, is expected to be very nearly allied to the former, is just as high as that between the United Provinces Brahmin and the Chuhra..... On historical ground we expect Bihar to approximate to the United Provinces. On referring to the table we find that the Kurmi comes near to the Brahmin, and the Chamar and the Dom stand much differentiated from him. But the Chamar in this case is not as much distinct from the Brahmin as the United Provinces Chamar is from the United Provinces Brahmin.. The table for Bengal shows that the Chandal who stands sixth in the scheme of a social precedence and whose touch pollutes, is not much differentiated from the Brahmin, from whom the Kayasthas, second in rank, can hardly be said to be distinguished. In Bombay the Deshastha Brahmin bears as closer affinity to the Son-Koli, a fisherman caste, as to his own compeer, the Chitpavan Brahmin. The Mahar, the Untouchable of the Maratha region, come next together with the Kunbi, the peasant. Then follow in order the Shenvi Brahmin, the Nagar Brahmin and the high caste Maratha. These results are rather old. Stated in a generalised form they mean that there is no correspondence between



social gradation and physical differentiation in Bombay.

Finally we come to Madras. Here we must treat the different linguistic areas separately for the schemes of social precedence in the various areas are different. According to the average given by Risely and by E. Thurston the order of castes is as follows: Kapu, Sale, Malla, Golla, Madiga, Fogata and Komati.

According to their social status they are ranked as below:

Brahmin, Komati, Golla, Kapu and others and Sale, Fagota and others. Mala Madiga occupy the lowest rank being the Pariahs of the Telugu country.

In the Canarese the nasal index gives the following order : Kamatak Smarts, Brahmin, Bant, Billiva, Mandya Brahmin, Vakkaliga, Ganiga, Linga Banajiga, Panchala, Kurha, Holey, Deshastha Brahmiff, Toreya and Bedar.

In the scheme of social precedence the castes are as under : Brahmin, Bant and Vakkaliga, Toreya, etc., Kuruba and Ganiga, Badaga and Krumba and Solaga, Billiva, Beda Holey.

The significance of the comparison is enhanced when we remember that the nasal index of the Holey, the Untouchables of the Canarese region is 75.1 that of the highest of the Brahmin being 71.5 while those of the jungle Krumba and the Solaga, who when Hinduised occupy the rank allotted to them in the list, are 86.1 and 85.1 respectively.

The Tamil castes may be arranged according to their nasal index as follows:

Ambattan, Vellai, Edaiyan, Agamudaiyan, Tamil Brahmin, Palli, Malaiyali, Shanam and Parayan. The Nasal indices of four typical Malayalam castes are: Tiyar, 75; Nambudri 75.5; Nayar 76.7; Charuman 77.2. The order of social precedence among these is : Nambudri, Nayar, Tiyar and Charuman. The nasal index of the Kanikar, a jungle tribe of Travancore is 8.46. Thus, the Charuman (an Unapproachable) belonging to the same race as the Brahmin rather than to Kanikar."

To omit from the above extract what is said about other communities and to draw attention to what relates to the Untouchables only, it is clear that the nasal index of the Chuhra (the Untouchables) of the Punjab is the same as the nasal index of the Brahmin of the United Provinces; the nasal index of the Chamar (the Untouchables) of Bihar is not very much distinct from the Brahmin of Bihar; the nasal index of the Holey (an Untouchable) of the Canarese is far higher than that of the Brahmin of Kamatak and that the nasal index of the Cheruman (an Unapproachable lower than the Pariah) of the Tamil belongs to the same race as the Brahmin of the Tamil Nad. If anthropometry is a science which can be depended upon to determine the race of a people, then the result obtained by the application of anthropometry to the various strata of Hindu society disprove that the Untouchables belong

to a race different from the Aryans and the Dravidians. The measurements establish that the Brahmin and the Untouchables belong to the same race.

From this it follows that if the Brahmins are Aryans the Untouchables are also Aryans. If the Brahmins are Dravidians the Untouchables are also Dravidians. If the Brahmins are Nagas, the Untouchables are also Nagas. Such being the facts, the theory propounded by Mr. Rice must be said to be based on a false foundation.

### III

The racial theory of Untouchability not only runs counter to the results of anthropometry, but it also finds very little support from such facts as we know about the ethnology of India. That the people of India were once organized on tribal basis is quite well known, and although the tribes have become castes the tribal organisation still remains intact. Each tribe was divided into clans and the clans were composed of groups of families. Each group of families had a totem which was some object, animate or inanimate. Those who had a common totem formed an exogamous group popularly known as *Gotra* or *Kula*. Families having a common *gotra* were not allowed to intermarry for they were supposed to be descended from the same ancestor having the same blood running in their veins. Having regard to this fact an examination of the distribution of the totems among the different castes and communities should serve as good a test for determining race as anthropometry has been.

Unfortunately, the study of the totems and their distribution among different communities has been completely neglected by students of sociology. This neglect is largely due to the current view propagated by the Census Commissioners that real unit of the Hindu social system and the basis of the fabric of Hindu society is the sub-caste founded on the rule of endogamy. Nothing can be a greater mistake than this. The unit of Hindu society is not the sub-caste but the family founded on the rule of exogamy. In this sense the Hindu family is fundamentally a tribal organisation and not a social organisation as the sub-caste is. The Hindu family is primarily guided in the matter of marriage by consideration of *Kul* and *Gotra* and only secondarily by considerations of caste and sub-caste. *Kul* and *Gotra* are Hindu equivalents of the totem of the Primitive Society. This shows that the Hindu society is still tribal in its organisation with the family at its base observing the rules of exogamy based on *Kul* and *Gotra*. Castes and sub-castes are social organisations which are superimposed over the tribal organisation and the rule of endogamy enjoined by them does not do away with the rule of exogamy enjoined by the tribal organisations of *Kul* and *Gotra*.

The importance of recognizing the fact that it is the family which is fundamental and not the sub-caste is obvious. It would lead to the study of the names of *Kul* and *Gotra* prevalent among Hindu families. Such a study would be a great help in determining the racial composition of the people of

India. If the same *Kul* and *Gotra* were found to exist in different castes and communities it would be possible to say that the castes though socially different were racially one. Two such studies have been made, one in Maharashtra by Riskey and another in the Punjab by Mr. Rose and the result flatly contradicts the theory that the Untouchables are racially different from the Aryans or the Dravidians. The main bulk of the population in Maharashtra consists of Marathas. The Mahars are the Untouchables of Maharashtra. The anthropological investigation shows that both have the same *Kul*. Indeed the identity is so great that there is hardly a *Kul* among the Marathas which is not to be found among the Mahars and there is no *Kul* among the Mahars which is not to be found among the Marathas. Similarly, in the Punjab one main stock of people consists of Jats. The Mazabi Sikhs are Untouchables most of them being Chamars by caste. Anthropological investigation shows that the two have the same *Gotras*. Given these facts how can it be argued that the Untouchables belong to a different race? As I have said if totem, kul, and gotra, have any significance it means that those who have the same totem must have been kindred. If they were kindred they could not be persons of different race.

The racial theory of the origin of Untouchability must, therefore, be abandoned.

## CHAPTER VIII